

एष देवो विश्वकर्मा महात्मा
सदा जनानां हृदये सन्निविष्टः ।
हृदा मनीषा मनसाऽभिक्लृप्तो
य एतद् विदुरमृतास्ते भवन्ति ॥
— श्वेताश्वतरोपनिषद्







MAHATMA

IN EIGHT VOLUMES

Volume V

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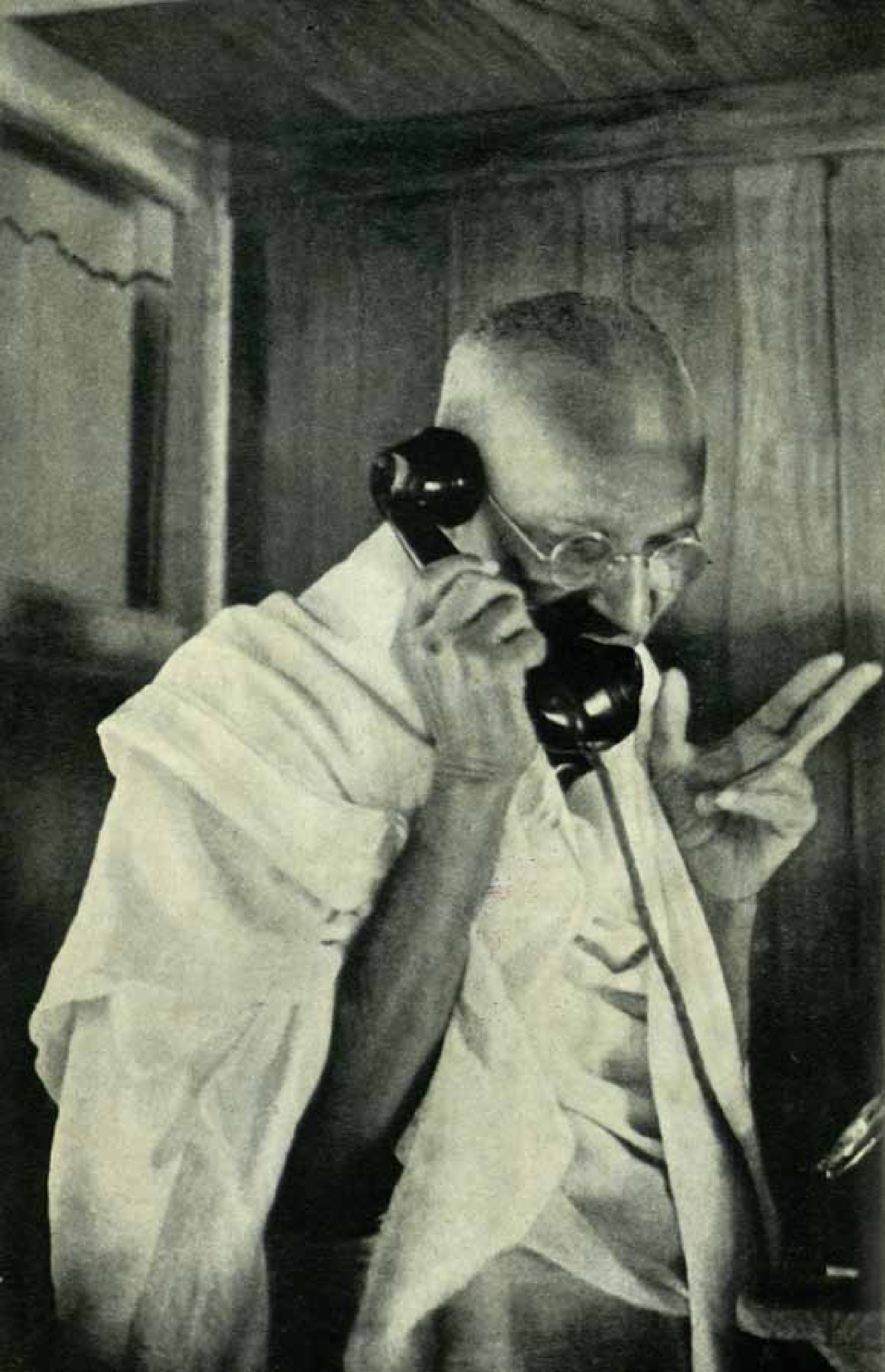
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MAHATMA

LIFE OF MOHANDAS KARAMCHAND GANDHI

He is the One Luminous, Creator of All, Mahatma,
Always in the hearts of the people enshrined,
Revealed through Love, Intuition, and Thought,
Whoever knows Him, Immortal becomes.

By

D. G. TENDULKAR

Illustrations collected and arranged by

VITHALBHAI K. JHAVERI



VOLUME FIVE 1938-1940

From The Publishers

The first volume depicted the early years of Gandhiji's life, his leadership in the South African struggle and his emergence in the field of Indian politics. The second volume opened with the new epoch, the Gandhian era, and it ended with the passing of the resolution on complete independence at the Lahore Congress on the last day of 1929. The third volume covered some of his subsequent political and social activities: the historic march to Dandi; pleading of India's case at the Round Table Conference in London; campaign against untouchability; his temporary retirement from the Congress in October 1934. The fourth volume depicted his ceaseless activities during 1934-8 in the field of village reconstruction. For full four years he concentrated on constructive revolution or teaching the masses the art of turning the idle hours to wealth. His organizational genius and close contact with the masses enabled the Congress to sweep the polls in 1937. He confined himself to constructive activities, but removed the self-imposed ban on politics by expressing his views fervently through *Harijan*. His articles on prohibition, basic education, duties and rights, sanitation, self-control *v.* birth control, art and literature for the masses, became the guiding principles to all who wanted to think and act along the new philosophy of life. War-clouds seemed to burst when the Munich Pact was signed and he advised the Congress to stand by non-violence in war or peace. There were rumblings in the Indian states and he directed the people's movement.

This the fifth volume depicts Gandhiji's re-emergence in the political field: the Rajkot struggle for securing rights to the people in the states, and the preparation for fight against the gagging orders during the war period of 1938-40. The main theme of this volume is Gandhiji's supreme faith in the non-violence of the strong in the critical days of the war. The warrior of peace gave courage to the

people of India and the world to try the new weapon of non-violence for the first time in the most critical period of history. Some of his most inspiring writings and speeches on war resistance form a vital part of this volume.

The remaining three volumes depict the Gandhian era with its different phases leading to India's freedom.

In this arduous task of collecting material and undertaking the publication of an eight-volume biography of Gandhiji, we have had co-operation from several friends and sympathizers, individual acknowledgements to whom are already made in the introduction to the first volume.

Gandhiji gave his graceful co-operation and thus made our work smoother. Jawaharlal Nehru has taken a keen interest in the publication and continues to give encouragement. R. R. Diwakar has helped us from the very beginning and he has made possible its publication in the present form.

Anu Bandyopadhyaya has given her ample co-operation in seeing the proofs, preparing the glossary and index.

Sumati Morarjee has lent us her unique collection of illustrations for embellishing the biography.

We are thankful to the workers of the Times of India Press for their co-operation.

Although the greatest care is taken in the preparation of this biography, we should be thankful if readers point out any mistakes they may come across in these volumes. We would also be glad, if they send us any documentary or pictorial material bearing on Gandhiji's life for reproduction in subsequent volumes.

D. G. Tendulkar
Vithalbhai K. Jhaveri

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Jacket and fly-leaf designed by Vithalbhai K. Jhaveri

MAHATMA

Warrior Of Peace

1938

In the middle of December 1938, the Working Committee met at Wardha to discuss important matters. The resolution defining the policy of the Congress towards the Indian states was drafted by Gandhi: "The Working Committee welcome the awakening of the people of Indian states in many parts of the country and consider this as a hopeful prelude to a larger freedom comprising the whole of India, for which the Congress has laboured. The committee support the demand for civil liberty and responsible government under the aegis of the rulers in the states, and express their solidarity with these movements for freedom and self-expression.

"While appreciating that some rulers of states have recognized this awakening as a healthy sign of growth and are seeking to adjust themselves to it in co-operation with their people, the committee regret that other rulers have sought to suppress these movements by banning peaceful and legitimate organizations and all political activity and, in some cases, resorting to cruel and inhuman repression. In particular, the committee deplore the attempt of some rulers to seek the aid of the British Government to suppress their own people, and the committee assert the right of the Congress to protect the people against the unwarranted use of military or police forces lent by the British authorities for the suppression of the legitimate movement of the people for responsible government within the states.

"The committee desire to draw attention afresh to the resolution of the Haripura Congress which defines the Congress policy in regard to the states. While it is the right and privilege of the Congress to work for the attainment of civil liberty and responsible government in the states, the existing circumstances impose certain limitations on this work, and the considerations of prudence prevent the Congress from interfering organizationally and directly in the internal struggles in the states.

"This policy was conceived in the best interests of the people to enable them to develop self-reliance and strength. It was intended as a measure of the goodwill of the Congress towards the states, and of its hope that the rulers of their own accord would recognize the spirit of the times and satisfy the just aspirations of their people. Experience has proved the wisdom of this policy. But this was never conceived as an obligation. The Congress has always reserved the right, as it is its duty, to guide the people of the states and lend them its influence. With the great awakening that is taking place among the people of the states, there must be an increasing identification of the Congress with the states people. The policy laid down by the Haripura Congress, which has been so abundantly justified, must continue to be pursued.

"While, therefore, the committee welcome the movements in the states for the attainment of responsible government, they advise the people not belonging to the states concerned against taking part in civil disobedience or the like. Participation by such people will bring no real strength to the movement and may even embarrass the people of the states concerned and prevent them from developing a mass movement on which strength and success depend.

"The committee trust that all movements in the states will adhere strictly to the fundamental Congress policy of non-violence."

Resolutions on the cleansing of the Congress organization and the question of the Arabs in Palestine and the plight of the Jews in Europe were drafted on the lines laid down by Gandhi in *Harijan*. The Working Committee passed a resolution declaring the Hindu Mahasabha and the Muslim League as communal organizations.

In the last week of December, the annual session of the Muslim League was held at Patna. According to its president, Jinnah, all attempts at a settlement of the Hindu-Muslim question had broken on the rock of Congress fascism; Gandhi had destroyed the very ideals with which the Congress started its career and converted it into a communal Hindu body. Criticizing the Congress policy in the Indian states, he said that it was a camouflage to secure numerical majority in the Central Assembly. If the Congress was determined to carry out its ulterior and sinister motive in the states, he would have to come to the rescue of the Muslims in the states. Jinnah concluded his speech by appealing to the Muslims to develop their own national consciousness.

On the other hand, Savarkar, the Hindu Mahasabha President detailing his theory of a Hindu nation at the Nagpur session observed: "Our politics hereafter will be Hindu politics fashioned and tested in Hindu terms only, in such wise as will help the consolidation, freedom, and life growth of our Hindu nation." To realize this, he exhorted all Hindus to unite and capture power from the Congress which was becoming increasingly anti-Hindu.

The Congress was branded on many sides as a totalitarian party. Mr. H. V. Hodson, the editor of *Round Table*, said in his talks with Gandhi at Segaon that the Congress acted as if it were the one and the only party in the country that mattered and, therefore, the Hindu-Muslim tangle had become almost insoluble. "It is a very wrong view to take of the Congress," said Gandhi. "The Congress does claim to be the one and the only party that can deliver the goods. It is a perfectly valid claim to make. One day or the other some party has to assert itself to that extent. That does not make it a totalitarian party. It is the ambition of the Congress to become representative of the entire nation, not merely of a particular section. And it is a worthy ambition in keeping with its best tradition. If you have studied the Congress history, you will find that since its very inception the Congress has sought to serve and represent all sections in the country equally, without any distinction or discrimination. It would love to be absorbed by the Muslim League if the Muslim League would care to absorb it, or to absorb the Muslim League in its turn, so far as the political programme is concerned. For religious and social activity, of course, every community can have its separate organization."

"But if the Congress has the ambition of absorbing other political organizations, it cannot help being a totalitarian party," observed Mr. Hodson.

"You may try to damn it by calling it totalitarian," said Gandhi. "Absorption is inevitable when a country is engaged in a struggle to wrest power from foreign hands; it cannot afford to have separate rival political organizations. The entire strength of the country must be used for ousting the third and usurping party. That is what is happening in India today. Where there is no common danger to oppose, there must be separate parties representing different schools of thoughts. You should bear in mind that the Congress does not impose its will on others. Its sanctions are non-violent."

"Would not the march to full responsible government be more rapid, if the Muslims were taken along?" asked Mr. Hodson. "Of course, it would be," said Gandhi. "Personally, I do no want anything which the Muslims oppose. But I have faith that the solution of Hindu-Muslim tangle will come much sooner than most people expect. I claim to be able to look at the whole position with a detached mind. There is no substance in our quarrels. The points of difference are superficial, those of contact are deep and permanent. Political and economic subjection is common to us all. The same climate, the same rivers, the same fields supply both with air, water and food. Whatever the leaders, mahatmas and maulanas may say or do, the masses, when they are fully awakened, will assert themselves and combine for the sake of combating common evils."

There was an extra rush of visitors at Segaon at the end of the year. A group of young teachers from the Ewing College and the Agricultural Institute, Allahabad, who were returning to America, paid a visit to Gandhi and asked, "How would you, an old and experienced leader, advise young men to throw away their lives in the service of humanity?"

"The question is not rightly put," replied Gandhi. "You don't throw away your lives when you take up the weapon of satyagraha. But you prepare yourselves to face without retaliation the gravest danger and provocation. It gives you a chance to surrender your life for the cause when the time comes. To be able to do so non-violently requires previous training. And if you are a believer in the orthodox method, you go and train yourselves as soldiers. It is same with non-violence. You have to alter your whole mode of life and work for it in peace time, just as much as in war time. It is no doubt a difficult job. You have to put your whole soul into it; and if you are sincere, your example will affect the lives of other people around you. America is today exploiting the so-called weaker nations of the world along with the other powers. It has become the richest country in the world, not a thing to be proud of, when we come to think of the means by which she has become rich. Again, to protect these riches you need the assistance of violence. You must be prepared to give up these riches. Therefore, if you really mean to give up violence, you will say, 'We shall have nothing to do with the spoils of violence, and if as a result, America ceases to be rich, we do not mind.' You will then be qualified to offer a

spotless sacrifice. That is the meaning of preparation. The occasion for making the extreme sacrifice may not come, if you as a nation have fully learnt to live for peace. It is much more difficult to live for non-violence, than to die for it."

They wanted to know if non-violence as enunciated by Gandhi had a positive quality. "If I had used the word 'love' which non-violence is in essence, you would not have asked this question," replied Gandhi. "But perhaps 'love' does not express my meaning fully. The nearest word is 'charity'. We love our friends and our equals. But the reaction that a ruthless dictator sets up in us is either that of awe or pity according respectively as we react to him violently or non-violently. Non-violence knows no fear. If I am truly non-violent, I would pity the dictator and say to myself, 'He does not know what a human being should be. One day he will know better when he is confronted by a people who do not stand in awe of him, who will neither submit nor cringe to him, nor bear any grudge against him for whatever he may do.' Germans are today doing what they are doing, because all the other nations stand in awe of them. None of them can go to Hitler with clean hands."

"What is the place of the Christian missions in the new India that is being built up today and what can they do to help in this great task?"

"To show appreciation of what India is and is doing," replied Gandhi. "Up till now they have come as teachers and preachers with queer notions about India and India's great religions. We have been described as a nation of superstitious heathens, knowing nothing, denying God. We are a brood of Satan as Murdoch would say. Did not Bishop Heber in his well-known hymn, 'From Greenland's Icy Mountains', describe India as a country where 'every prospect pleases, and only man is vile'? To me, this is a negation of the spirit of Christ. My personal view, therefore, is that if you feel that India has a message to give to the world, that India's religions too are true, though like all religions imperfect for having percolated through imperfect human agency, and you come as fellow helpers and fellow seekers, there is a place for you here. But if you come as preachers of the 'true Gospel' to a people who are wandering in darkness, so far as I am concerned you can have no place. You may impose yourselves upon us."

"What is India's real message to the world?" they asked.

"Non-violence," answered Gandhi. "India is saturated with that spirit. She has not demonstrated it to the extent that you can go to America as living witnesses of that spirit. But you can truthfully say that India is making a desperate effort to live up to that great ideal. If there is not this message, there is no other message that India can give. Say what you may, the fact stands out that here you have a whole sub-continent that has decided for itself that there is no freedom for it except through non-violence. No other country has made that attempt even. I have not been able to influence other people even to the extent of believing that non-violence is worth trying. There is, of course, a growing body of European opinion that has begun to appreciate the possibilities of the weapon of non-violence. But I want the sympathy of the whole world for India, if she can get it, while she is making this unique experiment. You can, however, be witnesses to the attempt only if you really feel that we are making an honest effort to come up to the ideal of non-violence and that all we are doing is not fraud. If your conviction is enlightened and deep enough, it will set up a ferment working in the minds of your people."

In Dr. Gregg Sinclair, Director of the Oriental Institute of the Hawaii University, Gandhi had a distinguished visitor and a sympathetic fellow searcher. "I have come here," he said to Gandhi, "to find out how best to bring to America an idea of the culture of India. I have seen your comments on the doctrine of 'Asia for the Asiatics'. You have put it extremely well. It is the same with our 'America for the Americans' doctrine."

"We have gained enough inspiration from the culture of Greece and Rome," the learned visitor added. "But Europe is finished for us, so far as the present age is concerned. We are, therefore, turning to India and the East for the new ideas that might show a way of escape from the impending calamity of violence and militarism that threatens Europe. A well-known professor of ours at Harvard used to say, a person who does not know Milton and Shakespeare can today hardly be considered as educated. But fifty years hence, I am sure, a person who is not acquainted with Bhartrihari and Kalidas will be put under that category."

"I was thinking of asking you to make an American tour," he remarked, as he rose to take his leave. "But Charlie Andrews said to me, 'Don't. He is far too important in India.' In every news-

paper that I pick up, I see your name on every page. So Charlie Andrews is probably right. But if you do come to America, we will be very glad to welcome you."

"I very nearly went to America on more than one occasion," said Gandhi, "and the dream may one day come true. But so far as outward evidence is concerned, today there seems to be no chance."

Every minute of the dying year was filled with incessant activity. On December 30, Gandhi went to Wardha to perform the opening ceremony of the Magan Museum of khadi and other village crafts and the Udyog Bhawan. The museum was erected as a monument to the memory of the late Maganlal Gandhi. Besides the khadi section, there were cottage industries sections. The exhibits included miniature models of various types of oil-presses, and contraptions used in paper-making, oil-pressing, leather-tanning industries, etc. There were samples too of raw material and rare specimens of folk art from all over India.

The Udyog Bhawan consisted of a group of structures erected in the vicinity of the museum to house the growing number of village industries that the A.-I.V.I.A. was being called upon to tackle. It was an exhibition of these crafts, and included paddy-husking, flour-grinding, oil-pressing, *gur*-making, bee-keeping, paper-making. There was, besides, a workshop for carpentry and smithy.

Declaring the museum open, Gandhi said:

"Maganlal Gandhi was one of those few spirits who chose to face precarious future by casting their lot with me in South Africa, when I decided to give up my legal practice in order to embrace the ideal of voluntary poverty and service. Although he had gone there primarily with the intention of earning money, he sacrificed his ambition and decided to sink or swim with me and he never turned back.

"He was, in my opinion, a genius. He had a versatile mind. His life was well ordered and disciplined. This enabled him to pick up anything new with ease and facility. Although not a mechanician by training, he soon made himself master of the printing machinery that was set up at Phoenix. On returning to India, he made service of the masses the passion of his life. He laid the foundation of the science of khadi by writing his *Vanat Shastra*. This work still holds its place as a classic, although the khadi science has made great progress since Maganlal's death. Although he had not specialized in all the various crafts that are at present being tackled by

the A.-I.V.I.A., his khadi activity, by providing the nucleus round which the village industries movement has since grown up, became its precursor.

"A word about the buildings. Although as Shri Kumarappa has observed they follow the rural style, they are still far above the rural standards of living as they obtain in our country today. They stand there as a futurist symbol of what artisans' dwellings should be and would be in the rural India of the A.-I.V.I.A.'s dreams. This much assurance, however, I can give you in this connection, that no pains have been spared to enforce the stingiest economy and simplicity commensurate with the purpose that they are intended to serve. The worst that can be said about the organizers of the associations is that they did not know their job as well as they might have. The association is always ready to admit mistakes and to regard them as the stepping-stones to knowledge. The one thing that it dreads is ignorance that masquerades as perfection.

"So much for the externals. Proceeding to the exhibits inside the museum, a critic may object, 'How can reversion to these primitive appliances and methods of production lead to swaraj? These village crafts have been with us always. Can they win the race against the industrial competition of the West and achieve anything like what the western countries with their latest inventions of science and engineering skill have been able to achieve?' My answer is that, although village crafts, have been with us always, our forefathers were not aware of the tremendous possibilities that lie hidden in these crafts and they were never plied by the awakened masses as a means for attaining freedom. I admit that in terms of orthodox and stereotyped standards of economics, as that science is understood and taught in our colleges today, and in a society governed by these standards, village industries, including spinning have perhaps no chance, and to revive them might appear like reversion to the Middle Ages. But I would like you to enter the Udyog Bhawan with a fresh and unsophisticated mind that has shed all its prejudices. Envisage this spinning wheel as a spinning mill in miniature, that enables a person to earn two annas daily in his home in this land of chronic and nation-wide unemployment and starvation, when otherwise he would not be earning two pice even. Picture this mill planted in lakhs of homes, as it is capable of being planted, and I see nothing in the world which can compete with it.

"And yet two annas per day by no means exhausts its income-yielding capacity. If only I get the co-operation of our intelligentsia, I hope, before I close my eyes, to see it bring a wage of eight annas a day to the spinner. Show me another industry or industrial corporation in the world that has in the course of eighteen years of its activities put four crore rupees into the pockets of lakhs of neediest and most deserving of men and women, with the same capital expenditure that the A.-I.S.A. has done. And this money has been evenly distributed among the Hindus and the Muslims, caste and the outcaste, without any distinction, uniting them in a common economic bond. Imagine what this would mean in terms of swaraj if many helped to cover the entire seven lakhs of our villages with this life-giving and unifying activity. You need not be highly specialized engineers or technicians to take part in this work of industrial revolution. Even a layman, a woman or a child can join in it."

"I would like you to regard the Magan Museum and the Udyog Bhawan not as the old curiosity shop, but as a living book for self-education and study."

Some thirty members of the economic conference which was held in Nagpur were present at the opening ceremony of the Magan Museum. The ceremony over, Gandhi led them in conversation saying, "I want you to criticize what you have seen, and tell me the defects you may have discovered. Praise will not help me. I know where I deserve praise. But don't tell me *ex cathedra* that the whole thing is doomed to failure, as some economists have done before. Such condemnation would not impress me. But if after a close and sympathetic study you discover flaws and point them out to me, I shall feel thankful."

"Are you against large-scale production?" they asked. Gandhi replied: "I never said that. This belief is one of the many superstitions about me. Half of my time goes in answering such questions. But from the scientists I expect better knowledge. Your question is based on loose newspaper reports and the like. What I am against is large-scale production of things that the villagers can produce without difficulty."

"What do you think of the Planning Commission?" was the next question. "I cannot say anything," replied Gandhi. "It was not discussed in my presence in the Working Committee. Because I still continue to tender advice to the Working Committee whenever my

advice is sought, it does not mean that everything that emerges from the Working Committee bears my imprimatur or is even discussed with me. I have purposely divested myself of responsibility, so far as the general body of decisions are concerned."

"Do you think that cottage industries and big industries can be harmonized?" they asked. "Yes," said Gandhi, "if they are planned to help the villages. The key industries, industries which the nation needs, may be centralized. But then I would not choose anything as a key industry that can be taken up by the villages with a little organizing. For instance, I did not know the possibilities of hand-made paper. Now I am so hopeful that I believe that every village can produce its own paper, though not for newspapers, etc. Supposing the state controlled the paper-making and centralized it, I would expect it to protect all the paper that villages can make."

"What is meant by protecting the villages?" they asked.

"Protecting them against the inroads of the cities," Gandhi replied. "In any case, under my scheme, nothing will be allowed to be produced by the cities which can be equally well produced by the villages. The proper function of the cities is to serve as clearing houses for the village products."

"Can we harmonize the cloth-mill activity with the handloom production?"

"So far as I know," he said, "my answer is an emphatic 'no'. All the cloth we need can easily be produced in the villages."

"But the number of mills is increasing," said the economists.

"That is a misfortune," said Gandhi.

"But that is one of the things that the Planning Commission has set itself to do," they said. "It is news to me," he replied. "In that case the Congress will have to scrap its resolution on khadi."

On the same topic, there was a discussion between Gandhi and M. Frydman, a Polish engineer. "The ultimate ideal of having self-sufficient villages is there," observed the engineer. "But that can come about where everyone is cultured in the Indian sense of the word. Does not industrialization serve to level the ground? Is it not sheer waste of energy merely to oppose it? Would it not be better to try to change its direction?"

"You are an engineer," said Gandhi. "You will, therefore, appreciate an illustration from mechanics. You know the parallelogram of forces. There the forces do not neutralize each other. Each force

acts freely along its own line and we get the resultant which indicates the final direction of motion. It is the same with the problem you have mentioned. As I look at Russia where the apotheosis of industrialization has been reached, the life there does not appeal to me. To use the language of the Bible, 'What shall it avail a man if he gain the whole world and lose his soul?' In modern terms, it is beneath human dignity to lose individuality and become a mere clog in the machine. I want every individual to become a full-blooded, fully developed member of society. The villages must become self-sufficient. And I see no other solution if one has to work in terms of ahimsa. Now I have the conviction. I know there are others who believe in industrialization. I work with all my being for my conviction. The process of adjustment goes on. I don't know what the outcome of it will be. But whatever it is, it will be to the good."

"Is no compromise with the industrialization possible without imperilling the ideal of self-sufficient villages?" asked Frydman.

"Oh, yes," replied Gandhi. "Railways are there, I do not avoid them. I hate motor-cars, but I make use of them willynilly all the same. Again I dislike fountain-pens, but just now I am making use of one, though I carry a reed pen in my box. Compromise comes in at every step, but one must realize that it is a compromise, and keep the final goal constantly in front of the mind's eye."

"When I turn from the busy West to the masses in the Indian villages," resumed Frydman, "I seem to be moving in a different world altogether in which stagnation reigns."

"Yes, so long as you look on the surface," said Gandhi. "But the moment you talk to them and they begin to speak, you will find that wisdom drops from their lips. Behind the crude exterior, you will find a deep reservoir of spirituality. I call this culture. You will not find such a thing in the West. You try to engage a European peasant in conversation, and you will find that he is uninterested in things spiritual. In the case of the Indian villager, an age-old culture is hidden under an encrustment of crudeness. Take away the encrustation, remove his illiteracy, and you have the finest specimen of what a cultured, cultivated, free citizen should be."

The last day of the year and New Year's Day brought to Segaon a unique gathering of representatives of the various nations that had been to the Tambaram conference. "This world in miniature," as Gandhi called them, included delegates from three continents.

There were Rev. Tema from Johannesburg, Rev. Sankange from South Rhodesia and Miss Mina Soga, the first Negro woman to visit India in a representative capacity. Gandhi got up eagerly to receive her. There was a Japanese delegate, Murao, from Tokyo. From China there were Rev. T. Lew, member of the Legislative Yuan, and Y. T. Wu, a distinguished journalist.

Most of them, as devout Christians, had a strong leaning towards pacifism, especially the representatives of the Chinese and Negro races were deeply interested in the method of non-violence as a weapon for resisting racial arrogance and aggression. Rev. Lew who saw Gandhi separately on the first day, remarked that China's struggle was not merely for China, but for the whole of Asia. He described the horrors of Japanese vandalism and said: "We want your message. We have translated your autobiography into Chinese. We look to you for spiritual guidance."

Gandhi said: "I was once asked by a Chinese friend from Santiniketan to give a message to the Chinese people. I had to ask him to excuse me. I gave him my reasons. If I merely said I sympathized with the Chinese in their struggle, it would be not of much value as coming from me. I should love to be able to say to the Chinese definitely that their salvation lay only through non-violent technique. But then it is not for a person like me, who is outside the fight, to say to a people who are engaged in a life and death struggle, 'Not this way, but that.' They would not be ready to take up the new method, and they would be unsettled in the old. My interference would only shake them and confuse their minds.

"But whilst I have no 'message' to send to the Chinese people who are engaged in fighting, I have no hesitation in presenting my viewpoint to you. I was almost going to ask you as to what you meant by being culturally ruined. I should be sorry to learn that Chinese culture resided in brick and mortar or in huge tomes which the moth can eat. A nation's culture resides in the hearts and in the soul of its people. Chinese culture is Chinese only to the extent that it has become part and parcel of Chinese life. Your saying, therefore, that your culture and your morals are in danger of being destroyed, leads one to think that the reform movement in your country was only skin-deep. Gambling had not disappeared from the people's hearts. It was kept down not by the tone set by the society, but by the penalty of the law. The heart continued to gamble. Japan is, of

course, to blame and must be blamed for what it has done or is doing. But then Japan is just now like the wolf whose business is to make short work of the sheep. Blaming the wolf would not help the sheep much. The sheep must learn not to fall into the clutches of the wolf.

"If even a few of you took to non-violence, they would stand forth as the living monuments of Chinese culture and morals. And then, even if China were overwhelmed on the battlefield, it would be well with China in the end, for, it would at the same time be receiving a message which contains a promise of hope and deliverance. Japan cannot force drugs down unwilling throats at the point of the bayonet. It can only set up temptations. You cannot teach the people to resist these temptations by replying to Japanese force by force. Whatever else force may or may not be able to achieve, it cannot safeguard Chinese morals or save Chinese culture.

"If you feel the truth of my remarks, you will become a living message to China. And you will then tell the Chinese people, that no matter what material destruction Japan inflicts, it cannot bring about China's cultural destruction. The people must be sufficiently educated and warned to resist all temptations that Japan may devise. Monuments and cities may be razed to the ground. They are but a passing show, that is going one day to be claimed by time as its own. If they are destroyed by the Japanese, it will only be a morsel taken out of time's mouth. The Japanese cannot corrupt our soul. If the soul of China is injured, it will not be by Japan."

The Chinese visitor was of opinion that only the economic collapse of Japan could save China. "What are the prospects of a boycott of the Japanese goods by India?" he asked.

"I wish", replied Gandhi, "I could say that there was any great hope. Our sympathies are with you, but they have not stirred us to our very depths, or else we should have boycotted Japanese goods, especially Japanese cloth. Japan is not only conquering you, but is trying to conquer us too by its cheap, flimsy machine-made goods. The sending of the medical mission was good as a gesture of friendship and goodwill which there are in abundance. But that does not give me much satisfaction, when I knew we could do much more. We are a big nation like you. If we told the Japanese, 'We are not going to import a single yard of your calico nor export our cotton to you,' Japan would think twice before proceeding with aggression."

This talk was followed by a discussion with the whole group. The Chinese delegates put searching questions. There was an eagerness to study the mind and face of non-violence. One of them asked, "Is it not necessary that individuals should practise non-violence first in their own person, in their relations with other individuals?"

"It would be a delusion to think otherwise," remarked Gandhi. "If one does not practise non-violence in one's personal relations with others and hopes to use it in bigger affairs, one is vastly mistaken. Non-violence, like charity, must begin at home. But if it is necessary for the individual to be trained in non-violence, it is even more necessary for the nation to be trained likewise. One cannot be non-violent in one's own circle and violent outside it. Or else, one is not truly non-violent even in one's own circle; and often the non-violence is only in appearance. It is only when you meet with resistance, as for instance, when a thief or a murderer appears, that your non-violence is put on its trial. You either try or should try to oppose the thief with his own weapons, or you try to disarm him by love. Living among decent people, your conduct may not be described as non-violent. Mutual forbearance is not non-violence. Immediately you get the conviction that non-violence is the law of life, you have to practise it towards those who act violently towards you; and the law must apply to nations as to individuals. Training is, no doubt, necessary. And beginnings are always small. But if the conviction is there, the rest will follow."

Another question was: "In practice of non-violence, is there not danger of developing a martyrdom complex or pride creeping in?"

Gandhi said: "If one has that pride and egoism, there is no non-violence. Non-violence is impossible without humility. My own experience is that whenever I have acted non-violently, I have been led to it and sustained in it by the higher promptings of an unseen power. Through my own will I should have miserably failed. When I first went to jail, I quailed at the prospect. I had heard terrible things about jail life. But I had faith in God's protection. Our experience was that those who went to jail in a prayerful spirit came out victorious, those who had gone in their own strength failed. There is no room for self-pitying in it either, when you say God is giving you the strength. Self-pity comes when you do a thing for which you expect some recognition from others. But here there is no question of recognition."

Another visitor placed his dilemma thus: "I am a firm believer in non-violence. Eight years ago I read your *Experiments with Truth* and immediately became converted to the way of life you have advocated there. Shortly after that, I translated your autobiography into Chinese. Then came the Japanese invasion. My faith in non-violence was put to a severe test and I was caught in a dilemma. On the one hand I felt I could not preach non-violence to my people who were never militaristic but who now believed that the resistance with force was the only way out. It was the best thing they knew, and I believed with you that 'I would rather risk the use of force a thousand times than let my people lose their manhood.' On the other hand, when I try to take a sympathetic attitude and try to do something helpful in such a situation, I find I am giving moral and material support directly and indirectly to something which is against the highest that I know. There seems to be no way out of this dilemma because I can't live in a vacuum, and anything I do will work one way or the other. While I can believe without reserve in non-violence in personal relationships, even though I fall short of it, I can't feel in the same way when I am faced with a national situation in which the great majority of the people have not even heard of the way of non-violence."

"Yours is a difficult situation," said Gandhi. "Such difficulties have also confronted me more than once. I took part on the British side in the Boer War by forming an ambulance corps. I did likewise at the time of what has been described as the Zulu revolt. The third time was during the Great War. I believed in non-violence then. My motive was wholly non-violent. That seemingly inconsistent conduct gave precedent for others to follow. But looking back upon my conduct on these occasions, I have no sense of remorse. I knew this too that my non-violent strength did not suffer diminution because of those experiences. The actual work I was called upon to do was purely humanitarian, especially during the Zulu rebellion. I and my companions were privileged to nurse the wounded Zulus back to life. It is reasonable to suggest that but for our services some of them would have died. I cite this experience not to justify my participation, however indirect it was. I cite it to show that I came through that experience with greater non-violence and with richer love for the great Zulu race. And I had an insight into what war by white men against coloured races meant.

"The lesson to be learnt from this by you is that, placed as you are in a position of hopeless minority, you may not ask your people to lay down their arms unless their hearts are changed, and by laying down their arms they feel the more courageous and brave. But whilst you may not try to wean people from war, you will in your person live non-violence in all its completeness and refuse all participation in war. You will develop love for the Japanese in your heart. You will examine yourself whether you can really love them, whether you have not some ill will towards them for all the harm they are doing. It is not enough to love them by remembering their virtues. You must be able to love them in spite of all their misdeeds. If you have that love for the Japanese in your heart, you will proceed to exhibit in your conduct that higher form of courage which is the hall-mark of true non-violence and which your Chinese friends will not fail to detect and recognize as such. You will not wish success to Japanese arms because you 'love' the Japanese. At the same time you will not pray for the success of Chinese arms. It is very difficult to judge, when both sides are employing weapons of violence, which side 'deserves' to succeed. You will, therefore, pray only that the right should prevail. Whilst you will keep yourself aloof from all violence, you will not shirk danger. You will serve friend and foe alike with a reckless disregard for your life. You will rush forth, if there is an outbreak of an epidemic or a fire to be combated, and distinguish yourself by your surpassing courage and non-violent heroism. But you will refuse to call the curses of heaven upon the Japanese people. If by chance some Japanese soldiers or airmen fall into the hands of the Chinese and are in danger of being lynched by an infuriated Chinese mob or otherwise ill-treated, you will plead for them with your own people and, if necessary, even protect them with your own life. You know the story of Emily Hobhouse. Though an English woman, she courageously went to the Boer concentration camps and exhorted the Boers not to lose heart, and it is said that, if she had not steeled the hearts of the Boer women as she did, the war might have taken a different turn. She was full of wrath against her own people, for whom she had not a good word to say. You would not imitate her unmeasured wrath which somewhat vitiated her non-violence, but you will copy her love for the 'enemy' that made her denounce the misdeeds of her own countrymen. Your example will affect the Chinese, and might

even shame some Japanese who will become the bearers of your message among the Japanese.

"A very slow process, you will perhaps say. Yes, possibly, under the existing adverse circumstances to begin with. But it will gather momentum and speed in an incalculable manner as you proceed. I am an irrepressible optimist. My optimism rests on my belief in the infinite possibilities of the individual to develop non-violence. The more you develop it in your own being, the more infectious it becomes, till it overwhelms your surroundings and by and by might oversweep the world."

"I, a believer in non-violence, often find that I am actuated by mixed motives. So does a war general have mixed motives. Is it not possible to fight, with love for the enemy in one's heart? May we not shoot out of love?" asked the Chinese.

Gandhi said: "We do often have mixed motives. But that would not be non-violence. There can be degrees in violence, not in non-violence. Constant effort of the votary of non-violence is to purge himself of hatred towards the so-called enemy. There is no such thing as shooting out of love in the way you suggest."

The last to place before Gandhi his problem was Mr. P. C. Hsu. "I can say honestly," he remarked, "I have no feeling of hatred towards the Japanese, but I feel that their military system is an evil. I used to think that all that was needed to end it was education in truth. I had hoped that at Tambaram, an international link between the two countries on the basis of mutual goodwill and peace would be forged. But I was disillusioned. I found that very little could be achieved immediately." He also tried to establish peace groups as an agency for carrying on the peace work, but found that confronted by a crisis, they were reduced to impotency and could offer little effective check. "Our difficulty is this," he concluded, "while sincerely believing in non-violence, we have not found a way of making it effective."

"Should that present a difficulty?" asked Gandhi. "A person who realizes a particular evil of his time and finds that it overwhelms him, dives deep in his own heart for inspiration, and when he gets it, he presents it to others. Meetings and group organizations are all right. They are of very little help. They are like the scaffolding that an architect erects—a temporary and make-shift expedient. What really matters is an invincible faith that cannot be quenched.

"Faith can be developed. Only the way it can be developed and in which it works differs from that in the case of violence. You cannot develop violence through prayer. Faith, on the other hand, cannot be developed except through prayer.

"Non-violence succeeds only when we have a real living faith in God. Buddha, Jesus, Mahomed—they were all warriors of peace in their own style. We have to enrich the heritage left by these world teachers. God has His own wonderful way of executing His plans and choosing His instruments. The Prophet and Abu Bakr trapped in a cave were saved from tneir persecutors by a spider which had woven its web across the mouth of that cave. All the world teachers, you should know, began with a zero."

Gandhi's interlocutor had another doubt: "Whilst we have isolated individuals who have the mind of Jesus, because they are not united, not organized, theirs remains a mere cry in the wilderness. The question that arises in my mind is: can love be organized? and if so, how?"

Gandhi replied: "Organization in the orthodox sense may not be possible. But there is no bar to united non-violent action. I am trying to show by a series of experiments that it is possible. It has its own technique."

"If China wins the war," finally asked the visitor, "will she be worse off or better off for her victory?"

"If China wins," said Gandhi, "and copies the Japanese methods, she will beat Japan hollow at her own game. The victory of China will not mean a new hope for the world. For, China will then be a multiple edition of Japan. But whether China wins or goes down, your line of action is clear. Even if China is defeated on the battlefield, your non-violence will remain undaunted and will have done its work. If China wins, you will go to the gallows in the attempt to wean China from copying Japan's methods."

The programme of action for the emancipation of the Negro race in South Africa was the theme of discussion that Rev. S. S. Tema, a Negro member of the African Congress, had with Gandhi at Wardha. There are ten million Negroes in South Africa as against two million whites and 75,000 Indians. Rev. Tema was anxious to learn the secret of non-violence programme of the Congress which went from victory to victory. "How can my people make their congress as successful as the Indian Congress?" he asked.

"The Indian Congress," said Gandhi, "became successful for the simple reason that it was inaugurated by the most selfless and cultured people that could be found in that age. They made themselves the representatives of the people and captured their imagination by reason of service and self-sacrifice. They were from the people and of the people." After describing in detail the services and the evolution of the Congress, Gandhi proceeded: "You have not, as far as I am aware, a band of Africans who would be content to work and live in impecuniosity. Among these who are educated, there is not that absolute selflessness. Again, while most of your leaders are Christians, the vast mass of the Bantus and Zulus are not Christians. You have adopted European dress and manners, and have as a result become strangers in the midst of your own people. Politically, that is a disadvantage. It makes it difficult for you to reach the heart of the masses. You must not be afraid of being 'Bantuized' or feel ashamed of carrying on assagai or of going about with only a tiny clout round your loins. A Zulu or a Bantu is a well-built man and need not be ashamed of showing his body. He need not dress like you. You must become Africans once more."

Of late, there had been persistent talk of forming a united Indo-African non-white front in South Africa. "What do you think about it?" asked Rev. Tema. "It will be a mistake," replied Gandhi. "You will be pooling together not strength but weakness. You will best help one another by each standing on his own legs. The two cases are different. The Indians are a microscopic minority; they never can be a 'menace' to the white population. You, on the other hand, are the sons of the soil who are being robbed of your inheritance. You are bound to resist that. Yours is a bigger issue. It ought not to be mixed up with that of the Indians. This does not preclude the establishment of the friendliest relations between the two races. The Indians can co-operate with you in a number of ways. They can help you by acting on the square towards you. They may not put themselves in opposition to your legitimate aspirations, or run you down as 'savages' while exhalting themselves as 'cultured' people in order to secure concessions for themselves at your expense."

Rev. Tema: "What sort of relations would you favour between these two races?"

Gandhi: "The closest possible. But while I have abolished all the distinction between an African and an Indian, that does not mean

that I do not recognize the difference between them. The different races of mankind are like the different branches of a tree. Once we recognize the common parent stock from which we are all sprung, we realize the basic unity of human family, and there is no room left for enmities and unhealthy competition."

Rev. Tema: "Should we adopt violence or non-violence as the means for our deliverance?"

Gandhi: "Certainly, non-violence under all circumstances. But you must have a living faith in it. Even when there is impenetrable darkness surrounding you, you must not abandon hope. A person who believes in non-violence, believes in a living God. He cannot accept defeat. Therefore, my advice is non-violence all the time, but non-violence of the brave, not of the coward."

"Your example," said Rev. Tema, "has shed so much influence upon us that we are thinking whether it would not be possible for one or two of our young men, who we are hoping will become the leaders, to come to you for training."

"It is quite a good and sound idea," said Gandhi.

Rev. Tema: "Do you think that Christianity can bring salvation to Africa?"

Gandhi: "Christianity, as it is known and practised today, cannot bring salvation to your people. It is my conviction that those who call themselves Christians do not know the true message of Jesus. I witnessed some of the horrors that were perpetrated on the Zulus during the Zulu revolt. Because one man, Bambatta, their chief, had refused to pay his tax, the whole race was made to suffer. I was then in charge of an ambulance corps. I shall never forget the lacerated backs of Zulus who had received stripes and were brought to us for nursing because no white nurse was prepared to look after them. And yet those who perpetrated all those cruelties called themselves Christians. They were 'educated' and better dressed than the Zulus, but not their moral superiors."

Rev. Tema had one more question to ask: "Whenever a leader comes up in our midst, he flops down after a while. He either gets ambitious after money or succumbs to the drink habit or other vice and is lost to us. How shall we remedy this?"

"The problem is not peculiar to you only," said Gandhi. "Your leadership has proved ineffectual because it was not sprung from the common people. If you belong to the common people, live like them

and think like them. They will make common cause with you. If I were in your place, I would not ask a single African to alter his costume and make himself peculiar. It does not add a single inch to his moral stature."

Critics scoffed at Gandhi's method of combating the dictators. "Non-violence," observed *Statesman*, "whether of the weak or of the strong, seems, except in very special conditions, rather a personal than a special gospel."

"I do not think that the sufferings of Pastor Niemoeller and others have been in vain," observed Gandhi. "They have preserved their self-respect intact. They have proved that their faith was equal to any suffering. That they have not proved sufficient for melting Herr Hitler's heart merely shows that it is made of a harder material than stone. But the hardest metal yields to sufficient heat. Even so must the hardest heart melt before sufficiency of the heat of non-violence. And there is no limit to the capacity of non-violence to generate heat.

"Every action is a resultant of a multitude of forces even of a contrary nature. There is no waste of energy. So we learn in the books of mechanics. And this is equally true of human actions. The difference is that in the one case we generally know the forces at work, and when we do, we can mathematically foretell the resultant. In the case of human actions, they result from a concurrence of forces, of most of which we have no knowledge. But our ignorance must not be made to serve the cause of disbelief in the power of these forces. Rather is our ignorance a cause for greater faith. And non-violence being the mightiest force in the world and also the most elusive in its working, it demands the greatest exercise of faith. Even as we believe in God in faith, so have we to believe in non-violence in faith.

"Herr Hitler is but one man enjoying no more than the average span of life. He would be a spent force, if he had not the backing of his people. I do not despair of his responding to human suffering even though caused by him. But I must refuse to believe that the Germans as a nation have no heart or markedly less than the other nations of the earth. They will some day or other rebel against their adored hero, if he does not wake up betimes. And when he or they do, we shall find that the sufferings of the pastor and his fellow workers had not a little to do with the awakening.

"An armed conflict may bring disaster to German arms, but it cannot change the German heart even as the last defeat did not. It produced a Hitler vowed to wreak vengeance on the victors. And what a vengeance it is! My answer, therefore, must be the answer that Stephenson gave to his fellow workers who had despaired of ever filling the deep pit that made the first railway possible. He asked his co-workers of little faith to have more faith and go on filling the pit. It was not bottomless, it must be filled. Even so I do not despair because Herr Hitler's or the German heart has not yet melted. On the contrary, I plead for more suffering and still more, till the melting has become visible to the naked eye. And even as the pastor has covered himself with glory, a single Jew bravely standing up and refusing to bow to Hitler's decrees will cover himself with glory and lead the way to the deliverance of the fellow Jews.

"I hold that non-violence is not merely a personal virtue. It is also a social virtue to be cultivated like the other virtues. Surely society is largely regulated by the expression of non-violence in its mutual dealings. What I ask for is an extension of it on a larger, national and international scale.

"I was unprepared to find the view expressed by *Statesman* writer that the example of Christ proved once and for all that in a worldly and temporal sense it can fail hopelessly! Though I cannot claim to be a Christian in the sectarian sense, the example of Jesus' suffering is a factor in the composition of my undying faith in non-violence which rules all my actions, worldly and temporal. And I know that there are hundreds of Christians who believe likewise. Jesus lived and died in vain, if he did not teach us to regulate the whole of life by the eternal Law of Love."

I Rejoice In This Defeat

1939

ON THE way to Bardoli, Gandhi wrote an editorial on Rajkot on January 2, 1939:

"Hitherto I have said hardly anything about the Rajkot struggle which has just ended as brilliantly as it began. My silence was not due to lack of interest. That was impossible owing to my intimate connections with the place. Apart from my father having been the dewan of the state, the late Thakore Saheb looked up to me as to a father. My silence was due to the fact that Sardar Vallabhbhai was the soul of the movement. To praise him or his work would be like self-praise.

"The struggle showed what non-violent non-co-operation could do, if there was adequate response from the people. I was wholly unprepared for the unity, grit and capacity for sacrifice that the people showed. They showed that they were greater than their ruler, and that even an English dewan was powerless before a people united in non-violent action.

"The Thakore Saheb deserves our congratulations for taking the reins in his own hands and overruling the English dewan's advice and the known wishes of the Resident.

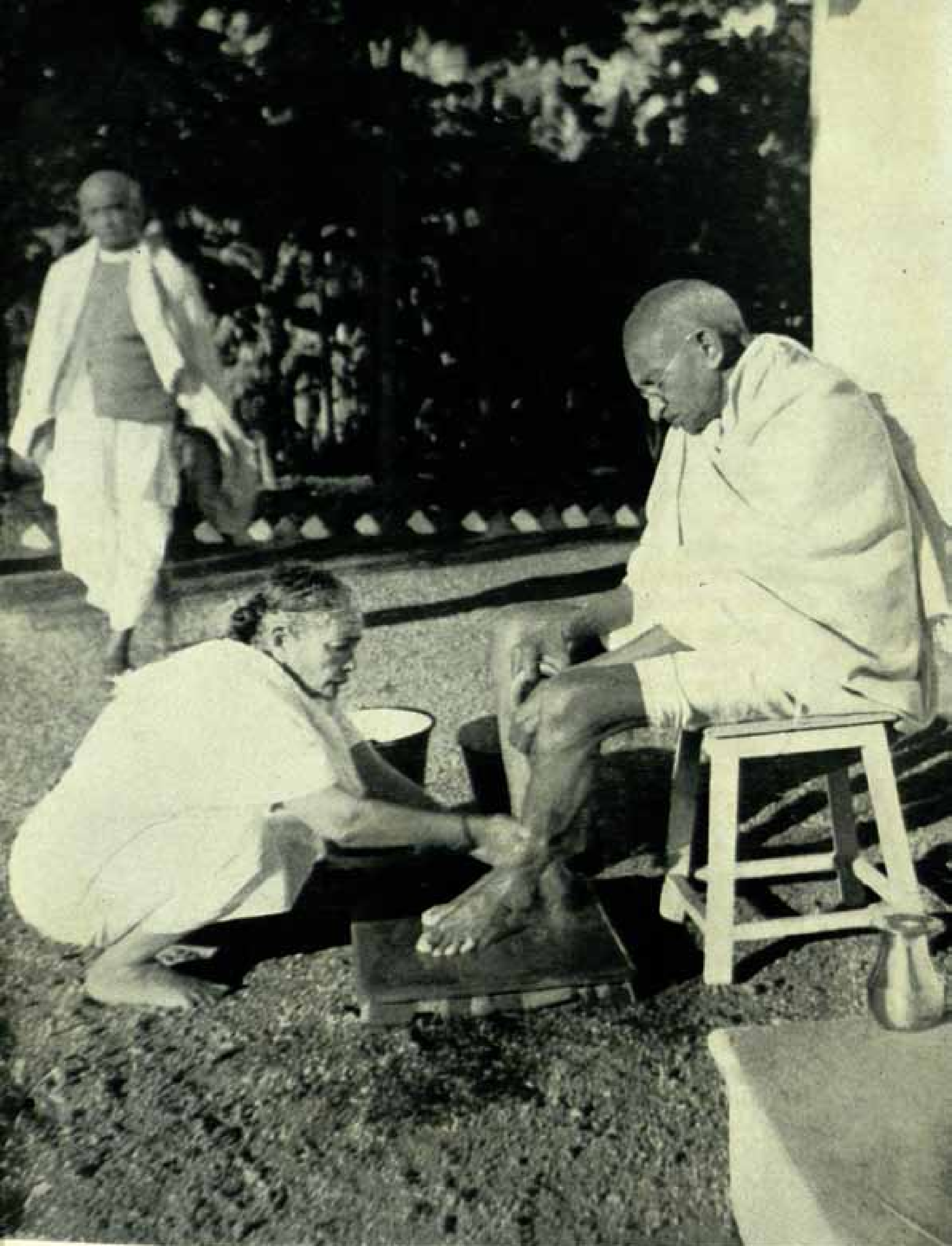
"From documents in my possession I know that Sir Patric Cadell supported by the Resident cut a sorry figure as servant of the Thakore Saheb. He acted as if he was the master. He traded upon the fact that he belonged to the ruling race and his appointment was subject to the sanction of the central authority, and thought that he could do what he liked. At the time of writing I do not know whether he has wisely retired or what has happened. The correspondence in my possession shows that the ruling chiefs have seriously asked themselves whether it is wisdom to have Europeans as their dewans. The central authority has to keep watch over Residents if its declarations are to be carried out as well in the letter as in the spirit.

"It is to be hoped that the ruling chiefs who stand in awe of the Residents will know from the example of Rajkot that if they are straight and if they have their people really at their back, they have nothing to fear from the Residents. Indeed they should realize that the paramount power resides not in Simla, not in Whitehall, but in their people. An awakened people who rely upon their non-violent strength are independent in the face of any conceivable combination of the armed powers. What Rajkot could do in three months, every state can do if the people show the qualities that the people of Rajkot showed.

"But I do not claim that the people of Rajkot had developed the rare type of non-violence that would stand true in the face of all odds. But Rajkot did show what even ordinary non-violence by a whole people in an organization could do for it.

"But great as was the work done by the people of Rajkot, as civil resisters their real test is yet to come. And their victory, if it is not followed up by a sustained exhibition of the same qualities that secured it, may prove also their undoing. By a long course of training Congressmen all over India have shown their capacity for offering civil resistance, but they have yet to show the capacity for constructive non-violence. Civil disobedience may well be adulterated with much incivility, that is, violence, and yet pass current. But construction is difficult. In it, detection of violence is easy. And existence of violence may even turn victory into a trap and prove it to have been a delusion. Will the people exhibit the requisite selflessness and self-denial? And will they resist the temptation to serve themselves and their dependents? Any scramble for power will rob the people at large of what they should really get if there was wise and resolute leadership that would command ready and willing obedience. Kathiawad is noted for its intrigues. It contains a race of politicals whose one aim in life is self-advancement, if it is also known to contain stuff of which the heroes are made. If the politicals gain the upper hand, there will be no Ram Raj in Rajkot. Ram Raj means renunciation all along the line. It means discipline imposed by the people. It is possible for Rajkot to radiate an influence that easily can make Rajkot an example to follow.

"Let the victory, therefore, be a time for humility, heart search and prayer, instead of self-satisfaction and vain rejoicings. I shall watch, wait and pray."



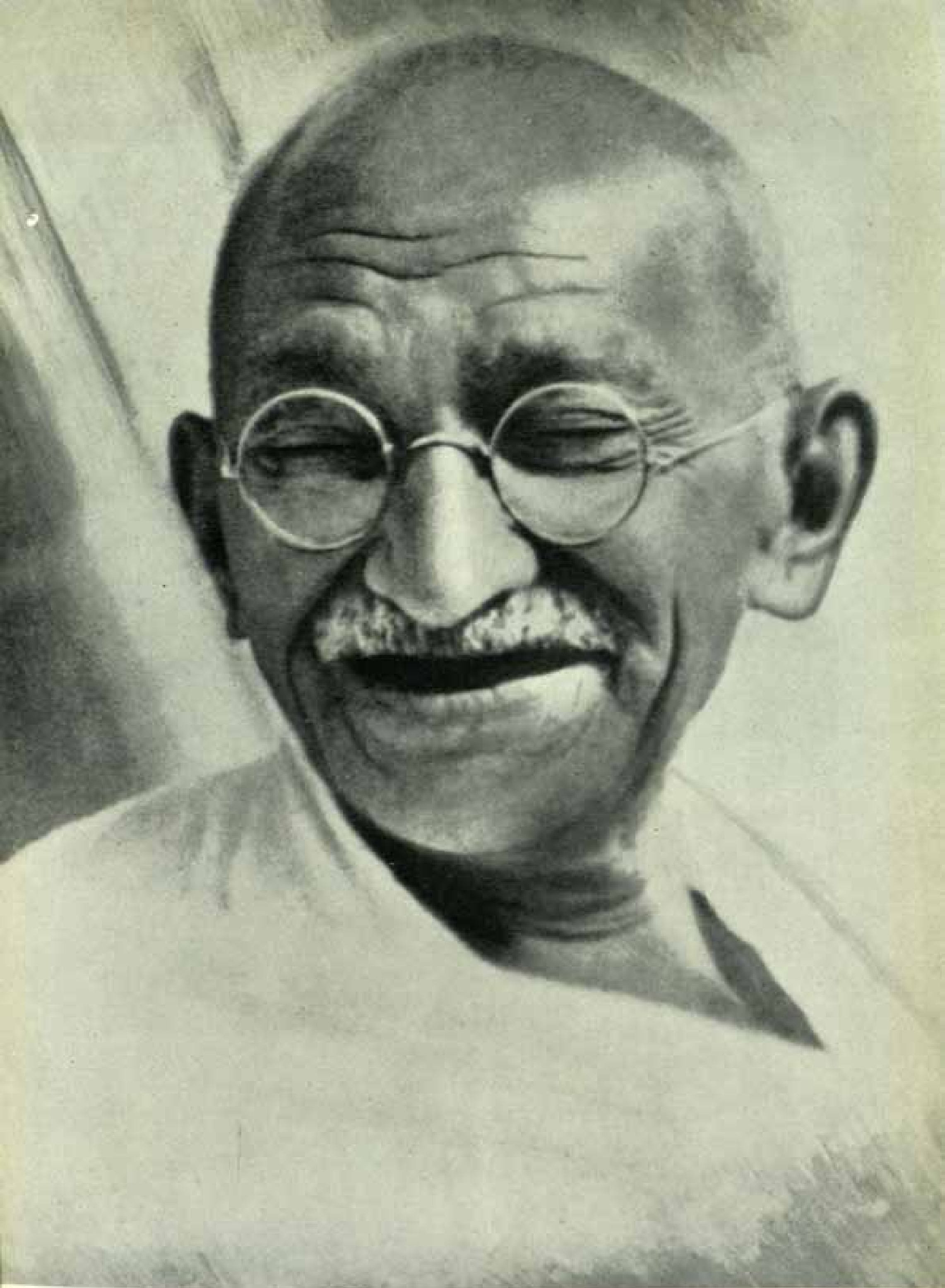
Photograph : Kanu Gandhi

Kasturbai helping Gandhi to clean his feet after his evening walk, Bardoli, January 1939



From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Gandhi's caricature by J. Crouch



From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Gandhi, aged 69



Photograph : Kanu Gandhi

Kasturbai, aged 69

Dr. Kagawa came to meet Gandhi at Bardoli. "Your reputation has preceded you Dr. Kagawa," said Gandhi hailing the Japanese visitor who fell on his knees to return the greeting. The preliminary questions were with regard to the co-operative movement but soon Gandhi turned to the burning question of the day. "What is the feeling of people in Japan about the war?" he asked.

"I am rather a heretic in Japan," said Dr. Kagawa. "Rather than I express my views, I would like to learn from you what would you do, if you were in my position."

"I would declare my heresies and be shot," retorted Gandhi. "I would put the co-operative and all your work in one scale, and put the honour of your nation in the other, and if you found that the honour was being sold, I should ask you to declare your views against Japan and, in so doing, make her live through your death. But, for this, inner conviction is necessary. I do not know that I should be able to do all that I have said, if I were in your position, but I must give you my opinion, since you have asked for it."

"The conviction is there," said Dr. Kagawa, "but friends have been asking me to desist."

"Well, don't listen to friends," said Gandhi, "when the Friend inside you says, 'Do this.' And friends, however good, can sometimes well deceive us. They cannot argue otherwise. They would ask you to live and do your work. The same appeal was made to me when I took the decision to go to jail. But, I did not listen to friends with the result that I found the glow of freedom when I was confined within the four solid walls of prison. I was inside a dark cell, but I felt that I could see everything from within those four walls, and nothing from outside."

Dr. Kagawa seemed to shrink from continuing this discussion, so he switched on again to his theme of co-operation: "Have you any irrigation co-operatives in India?" But Gandhi was full of other things. "You have done marvellous things, we have many things to learn from you. But how can we understand this swallowing alive of China, drugging her with poison and many other horrid things! How could you have committed all these atrocities? And then your great poet calls it a war of humanity and a blessing to China!"

Dr. Kagawa was eager to know how Gandhi's ahimsa could be reconciled with the Gita. "At the end of the Gita, Krishna recommends violence," he remarked.

Gandhi: "I do not think so. I am also fighting. I should not be fighting effectively, if I were fighting violently. The message of the Gita is to be found in the second chapter of the Gita where Krishna speaks of the balanced state of mind, of mental equipoise. In nineteen verses at the end of the second chapter of the Gita, Krishna explains how this state can be achieved. It can be achieved, he tells us, after killing all your passions. I should like to see the man dealing death who has no passions, who is indifferent to pleasure and pain, who is undisturbed by the storms that trouble mortal man. The whole thing is described in language of beauty that is unsurpassed. These verses show that the fight Krishna speaks of is a spiritual fight."

Dr. Kagawa: "But there was actual fighting then, and your interpretation is your peculiar interpretation."

Gandhi: "It may be mine, but as mine it has no value."

Dr. Kagawa: "To the common mind it sounds as though it was actual fighting."

Gandhi: "You must read the whole thing dispassionately in its true context. After the first mention of fighting, there is no mention of fighting at all. The rest is a spiritual discourse."

Dr. Kagawa: "Has anybody interpreted it like you?"

Gandhi: "Yes. The fight is there, but the fight as it is going on within. The Pandavas and the Kauravas are the forces of good and evil within. The war is the war between Jekyll and Hyde, God and Satan, going on in the human breast. The internal evidence in support of this interpretation is there in the work itself of which the Gita is a minute part. It is not a history of war between two families, but the history of man—the history of the spiritual struggle of man. I have sound reasons for my interpretation."

Dr. Kagawa: "That is why I say it is your interpretation."

Gandhi: "But that is nothing. The question is whether it is a reasonable interpretation, whether it carries conviction. If it does, it does not matter whether it is mine or *XYZ's*. If it does not, it has no value even if it is mine."

Dr. Kagawa: "To my mind, the ideas of Arjuna are wonderful. Krishna has found some excuse for him, and it was natural and necessary before Christianity."

Gandhi: "But, this interpretation is even historically wrong. For, Buddha existed long before the Christian era, and he preached the doctrine of non-violence."

Dr. Kagawa turned to his pet subject, co-operative society, and suggested change in the methods of agriculture. "No," said Gandhi laughing, "we need a change in the method of government."

In mid-January, the Working Committee met at Bardoli to consider the states problem which was becoming increasingly urgent. Gandhi wrote articles guiding the princes as much as the people. He blessed the reforms in Aundh and in the same issue of *Harijan* dated January 14, he guided the people of Travancore. "I have been against the mixing up of the struggle for responsible government with the charges against the dewan," wrote Gandhi. "I told them too that they would be justified in prosecuting the charges, if they made the dismissal the only issue, as they well might. But if they insisted on responsible government, there was no meaning in proceeding with the charges. If they got responsible government, which they were bound to, if they were united and strong in their faith in non-violence and truth, they would have control over all the dewans, present and future."

Some people questioned the propriety of Gandhi's advice to withdraw the personal allegations against the dewan and to suspend the movement for the time being. To explain the strategy, the interview that had taken place between Gandhi and the Travancore workers was published in *Harijan*:

"You tell me that you regard the removal of the dewan would help your movement as he is the chief obstacle in your way. If you persist in the charges, you must be prepared to prove them. But in my opinion it will have the inevitable result of pushing the question of responsible government into the background by bringing to the fore a purely personal issue. I call that playing the enemy's game. And you would give the wrong lead to the people. I do not want you to withdraw the allegations because they are not true, if you believe in them. I want those allegations to be withdrawn because you have a far bigger issue at stake. The greater includes the less. The removal of the dewan by itself would not give you responsible government. A clever dewan might choose to slip out and remain in the background till the storm has blown over and in the meantime use a substitute to crush the movement. Such things have happened before and will happen again. On the other hand, any responsible government includes the power to dismiss ministers according to the popular will. You can, therefore, say, without abating an iota from

your charges, that you do not want to dissipate your energy by pursuing these charges. These are the two alternatives before you, both of them perfectly legitimate. You have to make your choice. You should know best the psychology of your people. It may be such that the fight can be best conducted through the agitation to remove the dewan. Personally, when I weigh the pros and cons of the matter, I feel like saying you should swallow the bitter cup and concentrate on getting the reins of power into your hands.

"But whatever the decision about the allegations, I would advise you not to restart civil disobedience just now. You should put your own house in order. If you keep unadulterated non-violence at the back of your minds, you would not say, 'Let us take time by the forelock, and now that there is all this energy bubbling forth, let us consolidate our gains.' You would not capture power by madly frittering away the energy generated. That way lies danger. You will, if you follow that, only pave the way for the political schemers who may exploit the situation for furthering their own designs. I would, therefore, advise you to go slow, steadily gathering all the threads into your hands. You should become a homogeneous and disciplined mass by undergoing training in constructive work and non-violence. You may not take another forward step without canvassing public opinion inside and outside Travancore first."

In *Harijan* dated January 14, Gandhi commented on the ban on Jamnalal Bajaj entering the Jaipur state. " The humorous part of it all," he wrote, "is that Jamnalalji had to be described on the order as 'of Wardha'. As a matter of fact, he belongs to the Jaipur state, has property there, and has many relations residing there.

"It is to such an order that Jamnalalji has submitted wholly on my advice. There was the rumour that he might be arrested, if he attempted to enter Jaipur. He had, therefore, consulted me as to his duty, if an order was served on him. His co-workers of Jaipur had held that he should defy any such order there and then. I held a contrary opinion. And I have no cause to regret my opinion. The order, I reasoned with myself, would be a mad act. Mad people should not be taken at their word. They should be given time to cool down. I understand that great preparations were made in anticipation of the arrest. And there must have even been a kind of disappointment when the arresting party discovered that they were not to have their prey.

"Jamnalalji has lost nothing by waiting and by reasoning with the authorities and telling them that they have acted wrongly and hastily. As a responsible man and a Jaipur subject, it was perhaps his duty to give them time to reconsider their decision. If they do not, and Jamnalalji decides, as he must, to defy the order, he will do so with added moral strength and prestige. It is moral strength that counts in non-violent action.

"Let it be known that the maharaja is merely a tool in the hands of his ministers, who are all outsiders and some of them English. They know nothing of the people or the country. They are, as it were, imposed upon them. Jaipur talent is at a discount; though before the foreigners came, Jaipur was somehow or other able to hold its own as a state. I had reason to remark last week on the sorry figure the English dewan cut in Rajkot state during his very brief term of office. At least the act of the Jaipur Council consisting of the outsiders is a sorry exhibition of irresponsibility and ineptitude. The externment of one man, however great, may appear to be insignificant. But the events may prove that it was a foolish and costly affair, if not much more. For the reader may know that there is Praja Mandal in Jaipur, which has been working under Jamnalalji's inspiration for the past six years. Jamnalalji is its present president. The *mandal* is a strong organization containing responsible men as its members and has a good record of constructive work to its credit. The *mandal* will have to do its duty, if the ban is not removed. For, the ban is, it is said, a precursor of stopping even the constructive and the constitutional activities of the *mandal*. The authorities cannot brook the growing influence of a body which aims at responsible government in Jaipur under the aegis of the maharaja, no matter by means howsoever honourable. It seems to be the precursor also of a ruthless policy of stopping all activities of bodies having political ambition in any shape or form. And rumour has it that it is a concerted policy on the part of the Rajputana states. Whether it is true only of Jaipur or all the other states, it is sufficiently ominous, and Jamnalalji and the people of Jaipur state are in honour bound to resist it with all the strength at their command, no doubt, consistently with the Congress creed of non-violence and truth."

In the next issue of *Harijan*, Gandhi wrote an editorial on Jaipur authorities who by now had banned the Praja Mandal. A special

correspondent of *Times of India* interviewed Gandhi at Bardoli for the clarification of his statement that an all-India crisis would occur, if the Jaipur state authorities persisted in repression. Gandhi replied: "Sheth Jamnalal is an all-India man, though a subject of Jaipur. He is also a member of the Congress Working Committee and essentially and admittedly a man of peace. He is the president of an organization which has been working and has been allowed to work in Jaipur for some years. Its activities have always been open. It contains well-known workers who are sober by disposition and who have done much constructive work, both among men and women. There is at the head of the affairs in Jaipur a distinguished politico-military officer. He is shaping the policy of the state in connection with the ban pronounced against Sheth Jamnalal and his association, the Jaipur Rajya Praja Mandal. I take it that Sir Beauchamp St. John, the Prime Minister of Jaipur, would not be acting without at least the tacit approval of the central authority, without whose consent he could not become the Prime Minister of an important state like Jaipur.

"If the action of the Jaipur authorities precipitate a first-class crisis, it is impossible for the Indian National Congress, and, therefore, all India, to stand by and look on with indifference, whilst Jamnalalji, for no offence whatsoever, is imprisoned and members of the Praja Mandal are dealt with likewise. The Congress will be neglecting its duty if, having power, it shrank from using it, and allowed the spirit of the people of Jaipur to be crushed for want of support from the Congress. This is the sense in which I have said that the example of Jaipur, or, say, Rajkot, might easily lead to an all-India crisis.

"And the policy of non-intervention by the Congress was, in my opinion, a perfect piece of statesmanship, when the people of the states were not awakened. That policy would be cowardice, when there is all-round awakening among the people of the states and a determination to go through a long course of suffering for the vindication of their just rights. If once this is recognized, the struggle for liberty, wherever it may take place, is the struggle for all India. And whenever the Congress thinks it can usefully intervene, it must intervene."

In reply to a further question how the Congress as an institution and the Congress ministries in the various provinces were justified

in precipitating a crisis on an issue which exclusively concerned a state, Gandhi said: "Supposing in a particular district in British India, the collector butchered the people of that district, is or is not the Congress justified in intervening and precipitating an all-India crisis? If the answer is 'yes', then it applies to Jaipur also for examining the conduct of the Congress in terms of intervention. If there had been no non-intervention resolution by the Congress, this question really would not have arisen. Therefore, unthinking people very often blame me for having said that constitutionally the Indian states were foreign states. I do not accept that blame at all. I was wandering about in the states and I knew as a matter of fact that the people of the states were not ready.

"The moment the people became ready, the legal, constitutional and artificial boundary was destroyed. This is a tremendous moral question. Constitutionalism, legality and such other things are good enough within their respective spheres, but they become a drag upon the human progress immediately the human mind has broken these artificial bonds and flies higher. And that is precisely what is happening before my own eyes. Without any spur from any outside agency, I saw at once that there must be intervention by the Congress of the type you see today. It will go on from stage to stage, if the Congress remains the moral force that it has become—in other words, if the Congress lives up to its policy of non-violence.

"People say that I have changed my view, that I say today something different from what I said years ago. The fact of the matter is that conditions have changed. I am the same. My words and deeds are dictated by prevailing conditions. There has been a gradual evolution in my environment and I react to it as a satyagrahi."

The correspondent next drew Gandhi's attention to the recent developments in Rajkot and in Baroda, where the minorities were protesting against the Congress dictation. Gandhi said that he was unperturbed by those developments: "The movement for liberty cannot possibly be withdrawn or arrested because there are at the moment so-called communal splits. I see that history is repeating itself and the power that is losing ground is becoming desperate and fomenting trouble and dissension within, hoping to drag on its existence by means of dissensions. If the people know how to work the non-violent technique, the powers that are acting in this manner will be confounded and the people will rise victorious."

On January 23, Gandhi wrote an article on the Indian states:

"The movement for liberty within the states is entering a new stage. History is going to repeat itself. Talcher and Dhenkanal have led the way in repression. It is no small matter that 26,000 out of 75,000 all told have migrated from Talcher to British Orissa. They have been in exile for two months. I had hoped that they would have returned to their homes. But, there seems to be no peace for these people as yet. . .

"Ranpur has murdered a political agent. And the police and the military are having a merry time at the expense of innocent men and women. I hope that the Government of Orissa will firmly handle the situation and not let the imperial power deal with the situation as it chooses. The imperial power loses its head when it loses one of its own class in the circumstances attending the unfortunate murder of Major Bazalgette. This murder should show us that there is nothing to be gained by the people by such acts.

"Jaipur will not tolerate even the education of the Jaipurians to ask and fit themselves for responsible government, and presently would bury alive one of its foremost sons.

"The advisers of the Thakore Saheb of Rajkot think nothing of making him eat his own words and commit a breach of promise solemnly made to his people. The Resident of the Western States is party to this breach, if evidence in my possession is to be relied upon. To him the Congress and the Sardar are anathema. Ground is being prepared in Rajkot for fomenting quarrels between Hindus and Muslims and the people in general and the Bhayats. None of these have hitherto quarrelled. It is to be hoped that the Muslims and the Bhayats will not prove enemies of their own deliverance. The reformers' course is clear. They must avoid all clash. They must be prepared to die at the hands of their own people if the occasion arose. They have tried with marvellous success the weapon of non-violent non-co-operation. They can enforce it fully and simply sit still. The people are the paymasters, and the prince and the officials are their servants who have to do the will of their masters. This is literally true of an awakened and enlightened people who know the art of thinking and acting as of one mind.

"I would urge the people in the other states to hasten slowly. Liberty is theirs, if they will have patience and self-restraint. Let them everywhere knit themselves together and have a consciousness

of their strength. They should not have internal dissensions. They must know how to combat the maxim of irresponsibility—divide and rule. It is easy enough, if the reformers master the technique of non-violence.

"Travancoreans had better be on their guard. I have sufficient evidence in my possession to show that attempts are being made to create divisions between the Hindus, Christians and Ezhavas. If they are to have responsible government, they must forget that they are of these different communities. They must learn that they are one and indivisible political unit, and they must attain control over all forces of violence. They must take full responsibility for peace throughout Travancore without the aid of the police, if they are to win freedom through the non-violent means. Meetings and processions are necessary for propaganda among ignorant masses. They are not necessary for a people awakened to a sense of their own duty as citizens. Swaraj is for the awakened, not for the sleepy and the ignorant."

The stage now seemed to be set for a climax but suddenly came an anti-climax. A controversy arose over the election of a president for the forthcoming session of the Congress. The names of Azad and Subhas Bose and Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya were prominently mentioned and it was hoped that the two of them would retire, leaving the election to be unanimous. The election was to be held on January 29. On January 20, Azad stated that for the reasons of health he could not agree to shoulder the burdens of the position, recommending Dr. Pattabhi's name for the Congress presidentship. The next day Bose made a press statement to the effect that the presidential election would be fought over. He gave reasons for preferring his method of choosing the head of the supreme national organization. With "the progressive sharpening of anti-imperialist struggle in India", there had emerged "new ideas and ideologies, and problems and programmes". And a feeling was growing in the country that "as in other free countries the presidential election in India should be fought on the basis of different problems and programmes". Such contests could help in the clarification of the issues and "give a clear indication of the public mind"; as such they may not be "undesirable" things. In view of the increasing international tension and the prospective fight over the federation in India, the year 1939 will be "a momentous one in our national history". He

was prepared to put this question to the test whether or not the majority of delegates demanded his services in office specially when "up till now I have not received any suggestion or advice from a single delegate asking me to withdraw from the contest".

On January 24, from Bardoli, seven members of the Congress Working Committee—Sardar Patel, Rajendra Prasad, Jamnalal Bajaj, Jairamdas Daulatram, Shankarrao Deo, Bhulabhai Desai and Kripalani—issued a press statement questioning the validity of the reasons for a contest given in the statement of Subhas Bose. "So far as we know," they declared, "hitherto, presidential elections have been unanimous. Subhas Babu has set up a new precedent, which he has a perfect right to do. The wisdom of the course adopted by him can be known only by experience. But we have grave doubts about it. We would have waited for a greater consolidation of the Congress ranks, greater toleration and greater respect for one another's opinions before making the Congress presidential election a matter of contest. We would have gladly refrained from saying anything upon the statement. But we feel that we would be neglecting our clear duty when we hold strong views about the forthcoming election. It was a matter of deep sorrow to us that Maulana Azad felt called upon to withdraw from the contest. But when he had finally decided to withdraw, he had advocated Dr. Pattabhi's election in consultation with some of us. This decision was taken with much deliberation. And we feel that it is a sound policy to adhere to the rule of not re-electing the same president except under very exceptional circumstances.

"In his statement Subhas Babu has mentioned his opposition to the federation. This is shared by all the members of the Working Committee. It is the Congress policy. He has mentioned ideologies and policies and programmes. All this, we feel, is not relevant to the consideration of the choice of the Congress President. The Congress policy and programmes are not determined by its successive presidents. If it were so, the constitution would not limit the office to one year. The policy and programmes of the Congress, when they are not determined by the Congress itself, are determined by the Congress Working Committee. The position of the president is that of a chairman. More than this, the president represents and symbolizes, as under constitutional monarchy, the unity and solidarity of the nation. This position, therefore, has rightly been considered as

one of the very great honour and as such the nation has sought to confer it on as many of its illustrious sons as would be possible by the annual elections.

"The election, as befits the dignity of this high office, has always been unanimous. And any controversy over the election, even on the score of the policies and programmes is, therefore, to be deprecated. We believe that Dr. Pattabhi is quite fitted for the post of President of the Congress. He is one of the oldest members of the Working Committee and he has a long and unbroken record of public service to his credit. We, therefore, commend his name to the Congress delegates for the election. We would also, as his colleagues, urge on Subhas Babu to reconsider his decision and to allow Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya's election to be unanimous."

In the course of a lengthy reply, Bose stated: "In an election contest between the two members of the Working Committee, one would not expect the other members to take sides in an organized manner, because that would obviously not be fair. In the statement we are told for the first time that the decision to advocate Dr. Pattabhi's election was taken with much deliberation. Neither I, nor some of my colleagues on the Working Committee, had any knowledge or idea of either the deliberation or the decision. I wish the signatories had issued the statement not as the members of the Congress Working Committee, but as individual Congressmen. If the presidential election is to be an election worth the name, there should be freedom of voting without any moral coercion. Otherwise why not end the elective system and have the president nominated by the Working Committee?

"It is news to me that there is a rule that the same person should not be re-elected president except under exceptional circumstances. If one traces the history of the Congress, one will find that in many cases the same person has been elected more than once. I am also surprised at the remark that the presidential elections have hitherto been unanimous. I remember to have voted for one candidate in preference to another on several occasions. It is only in recent years that the election has been unanimous.

"Since the adoption of the new constitution in 1934, the Working Committee is being nominated, theoretically at least, by the president. Since that year, the position of the Congress President has been raised to a higher level. It is, therefore, natural that the new

conventions should grow up around the Congress President and his election. The position of the president today is no longer analogous to that of the chairman of a meeting. The president is like the Prime Minister or the President of the United States of America, who nominates his own cabinet. It is quite wrong to liken the Congress President to a constitutional monarch.

"I may add that the questions of policy and programme are not irrelevant and they would have been raised long ago in connection with the election of the Congress President, had it not been for the fact that after the Congress of 1934, a leftist has been elected president every time, with the support of both the right and the left wings. The departure from this practice this year and the attempt to set up a rightist candidate for the office of president is not without significance. It is widely believed that there is a prospect of a compromise on the federal scheme between the right wing of the Congress and the British Government during the coming year. And consequently, the right wing do not want a leftist president who may be a thorn in the way of a compromise and may put obstacles in the path of the negotiations. One has only to move about among the public and enter into a discussion with them in order to realize how widespread this belief is. It is imperative, in the circumstances, to have a Congress President who will be an anti-federationist to the core of his heart.

"It is really a regret that my name has been proposed as a candidate for the presidentship. I had suggested to my numerous friends that a new candidate from the left wing should be put up this year, but unfortunately that could not be done and my name was proposed from several provinces. Even at this late hour, I am prepared to withdraw from the contest if a genuine anti-federationist like Acharya Narendra Deva, for instance, be accepted as the president for the coming year.

"I feel strongly that we should have, during this momentous year, a genuine anti-federationist in the presidential chair. If the right wing really want national unity and solidarity, they would be well advised to accept a leftist as president. They have created considerable misapprehension by their insistence on a rightist candidate at any cost and by an unseemly manner in which they have set up such a candidate, who was retiring and who had been surprised that his name had been suggested for the presidentship."

On January 25, Sardar Patel made a counter-statement and said that speaking personally he felt that in the election issue the matter was not of persons or principles and not of the leftists and rightists. "For, the sole consideration is what is in the best interests of the country." He added: "At the informal consultations at one stage or the other at which Maulana Azad, Jawaharlal Nehru, Rajendra Prasad, Bhulabhai Desai, Kripalani, Mahatma Gandhi and myself were present, not by design but by accident, it was agreed that if perchance Maulana Azad remained adamantine in his resistance, according to the constitution Dr. Pattabhi was the only choice left, since we were clearly of the opinion that it was unnecessary to re-elect Subhas Bose."

Bose in his reply stood firm on his previous press statement and added: "Though the Congress resolution on the federation is one of uncompromising hostility, the fact remains that some influential Congress leaders have been advocating the conditional acceptance of the federation in private and in public. Up till now, there has not been the slightest desire on the part of the rightist leaders to condemn such activities. Not only that. It is also generally believed that the prospective list of ministers for the federation cabinet has been already drawn up. In the circumstances, it is but natural that the left or radical bloc in the Congress should feel so strongly on the question of the federation scheme and should desire to have a genuine anti-federationist in the presidential chair."

Jawaharlal Nehru made a statement on January 27. He regretted that the presidential election controversy had taken an unfortunate turn and wrong issues had been raised. He said that there was no question of conflict over federation in this election, as the Congress had definitely rejected the scheme: "Personally, I do not see what principles or programmes are at stake. I do not want it to be said at the end of the contest, that a particular programme had been rejected when, in fact, it was not an issue." With regard to the position and function of the President of the Congress, he said that it was true that the Congress itself or the All-India Congress Committee "ultimately" laid down the policy. But "the president can, however, make a difference in the carrying out of the policy, and the Congress President is not, in my opinion, merely a speaker."

Gandhi took no part in the controversy but he wrote an editorial in *Harijan*, dated January 28, on the "Internal Decay":

"My time and that of co-workers is largely taken up in wading through complaints about corruption among Congressmen. Besides impersonation, there is the wholesale tampering with the Congress registers which contain bogus names. These registers have as much value as a box containing counterfeit coins, though it is claimed to contain rupees. Strife at Congress elections is becoming a common occurrence. Indiscipline of Congressmen is on the increase everywhere. Many make irresponsible, even violent, speeches. Many fail to carry out instructions. Rome's decline began long before it fell. The Congress, which has been nursed for over fifty years by the best brains of the country, will not fall the moment it has begun to decay. It need not fall at all, if corruption is handled in time.

"In my opinion, the greatest work before the Congress will be to deal with this fourfold process of decay. We are yet far from our goal. We shall be no nearer it, if we are not sure of our means and their meaning and implications. When the time comes, we shall be found wanting. If I was called upon to lead, say, an army of civil resisters, I should be unable to shoulder the burden. This is a big admission to make. But I should be guilty of cowardice and worse, if I did not make it. Though there is non-violence enough among the masses, there is not enough among those who have to organize the masses. Even as a banker cannot run a bank, if he has nothing in his chest, so can a general not lead a battle, if he has no soldiers on whom he can rely implicitly.

"Let no Congressman blame me for thinking aloud. Although I am not in the Congress, I have not ceased to be of it. Congressmen still expect me to give the call when, in my opinion, the time for action has come. What is more, if God so wills it, I feel that I have enough strength and energy in me to lead a battle much more strenuous than any I have fought. But there are Saharas in the way. I have mentioned one which Congressmen can see, touch and handle. The Congress would not be harmed by my having lifted the curtain and exposing our ugliness to the public gaze. It would be harmed, if knowing the truth, I hid it from the public.

"Out of the present condition of the Congress, I see nothing but anarchy and red ruin in front of the country. Shall we face the harsh truth at Tripuri?"

Subhas Bose defeated Dr. Pattabhi by 1,580 votes against 1,375. On January 31, two days after the election and its results became

known, Gandhi issued a statement from Bardoli saying "I rejoice in this defeat":

"Shri Subhas Bose has achieved a decisive victory over his opponent, Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya. I must confess that from the very beginning, I was decidedly against his re-election for reasons into which I need not go. I do not subscribe to his facts or arguments in his manifestoes. I think that his references to his colleagues were unjustified and unworthy. Nevertheless, I am glad of his victory. And since I was instrumental in inducing Dr. Pattabhi not to withdraw his name as a candidate, when Maulana Azad withdrew, the defeat is more mine than his. I am nothing, if I do not represent definite principles and policy. Therefore, it is plain to me that the delegates do not approve of the principles and policy for which I stand.

"I rejoice in this defeat. It gives me an opportunity of putting into practice what I preached in my article on the walk-out of the minority at the last A.-I.C.C. meeting in Delhi. Subhas Babu, instead of being president on the sufferance of those whom he calls the rightists, is now president elected in a contested election. This enables him to choose a homogeneous cabinet and enforce his programme without let or hindrance.

"There is one thing common between the majority and minority, namely, insistence on internal purity of the Congress organization. My writings in *Harijan* have shown that the Congress is becoming a corrupt organization in the sense that its registers contain a very large number of bogus members. I have been suggesting for the past many months the overhauling of these registers. I have no doubt that many of the delegates who have been elected on the strength of these bogus voters would be unseated on scrutiny. But I suggest no such drastic step. It will be enough if the registers are purged of all bogus voters and are made foolproof for the future.

"The minority has no cause for being disheartened. If they believe in the current programme of the Congress, they will find that it can be worked, whether they are in a minority or a majority, and even whether they are in the Congress or outside it.

"The only thing that may possibly be affected by the changes is the parliamentary programme. The ministers have been chosen and the programme shaped by the erstwhile majority. But the parliamentary work is but a minor item of the Congress programme. Congress ministers have after all to live from day to day. It matters

little to them whether they are recalled on an issue in which they are in agreement with the Congress policy or whether they resign because they are in disagreement with the Congress.

"After all, Subhas Babu is not an enemy of his country. He has suffered for it. In his opinion, his is the most forward and boldest policy and programme. The minority can only wish it all success. If they cannot keep pace with it, they must come out of the Congress. If they can, they will add strength to the majority.

"The minority may not obstruct on any account. They must abstain when they cannot co-operate. I must remind all Congressmen that those, who being Congress-minded remain outside it by design, represent it most. Those, therefore, who feel uncomfortable in being in the Congress, may come out, not in a spirit of ill will, but with the deliberate purpose of rendering more effective service."

Subhas Bose expressed grief that Gandhi should have taken the result of the election as a personal defeat. He said that it would always be his aim to win Gandhi's confidence: "It will be a tragic thing for me, if I succeed in winning the confidence of other people but fail to win the confidence of India's greatest man."

Rajkot

1939

IN THE bustle and heat of presidential election, Bardoli celebrated Independence Day in a novel and striking manner. On January 26, 1939, about twenty thousand people called Dublas or Halis, who led lives of semi-serfdom, were, with the free consent of their erstwhile masters, freed from the yoke and restored to man's estate. The emancipation, however, was no spontaneous act of generosity on the part of the masters. It was the outcome of a slow, silent agitation by the "Gandhiwalas" for over a decade. A joint meeting of Dublas and the landed class was addressed by Gandhi. "The meaning of emancipation is," he said, "that the *Halpati* is free to choose his own field of labour. You have entered into a sacred pact which should make your relations with the land-owner sweeter than before. You need not leave the farm on which you worked and the farmer for whom you worked. Only you will work voluntarily and cheerfully and he will work alongside of you. That you will be called *Halpatis*, does not mean that the owner of land will give up the *hal*, plough. The rates you have fixed do not mean that the farmer will pay only four annas and a half when there is a bumper crop and soaring prices. The spirit of the resolution means that you will give them a much higher wage.

"What you have done today, you ought to have done in 1921. But better late than never, and I am happy that you have at last done what ought to have been done. But this wage will not emancipate you really. Agriculture by itself cannot support you all. That is why I have placed the spinning wheel before the country and I am never tired of singing its praises."

The next day Gandhi visited the village of Varad to celebrate the restoration of lands to the peasants. Addressing the villagers, he explained: "There can be no two opinions that this is an auspicious occasion. We declared times without number that the confiscated

lands would some day or other be restored to their owners. They have been restored. It would be wrong to think that we have won them back by dint of our bravery. We won to the extent that God enabled us to adhere to truth and non-violence. Do not for a moment think that because lands have come back to us, swaraj has been won. I warn you not to delude yourselves for a moment and not to go back to your pleasures and follies. A higher ordeal has yet to come. Let us in all humility pray to God that He may bless us with strength hundredfold of that which He has bestowed on us up to now, so that we may be able to stand more fiery ordeals. We have had the courage to go to jail, to lose our homes and lands. Let us pray for the courage to go to the scaffold cheerfully or to become ashes in a raging fire. When we have exhibited that courage, swaraj will be ours and none dare rob us of it. But if we forget the lesson of to-day, we shall lose the battle and be bankrupt. I hope and pray that none of us may be found wanting when the supreme test comes."

By now, the movement for liberty within the states had entered a new stage. And in several regions open struggle had broken out. Repression was being applied so fiercely in Talcher and Dhenkanal that thousands of the state subjects had fled to British Orissa for sanctuary. Travancore was seething with discontent. Jaipur was endeavouring to destroy the popular movement and had refused to permit the entry into the state of Jamnalal Bajaj. Rajkot affairs loomed large. About this time there was a meeting of the Chamber of Princes in Bombay. They were particularly disturbed by events in Rajkot and lost no time in proposing a common police force for a group of states, which it was claimed was "the indication of the paramount power and its representatives." Praja Mandals were to be crushed out of existence.

On the eve of Independence Day, Sardar Patel announced the resumption of struggle in Rajkot. The reason was "cold-blooded breach of a solemn covenant". One of the terms of the settlement was that a council of ten members should be appointed to submit within a month a scheme of constitutional reform. It was agreed that the seven non-official members of the committee were to be chosen by Sardar Patel. The Thakore Saheb guided from above accepted four names from the Sardar's list of seven and rejected the rest on the ground that seats had to be found for the representatives of Muslims and other minorities. It was an excuse for going back

on a solemn agreement in order to retrieve the loss of prestige that the British bureaucracy had suffered at the hands of the people. Sardar Patel pleaded in vain with the Thakore Saheb to honour his plighted word and avert a repetition of the struggle. "It now remains for me," he declared on January 25, "to invite the people of Rajkot to resume the self-chosen course of suffering for vindicating the liberty and saving Rajkot and the Thakore Saheb from utter ruin. It is best to anticipate and provide for the worst."

"The struggle in Rajkot is frankly for a responsible government within the state," observed Gandhi, "and is now for redeeming the ruler's promise to his people. Every man and woman of Rajkot, if they have any stuff in them, will be reduced to dust in resisting the dishonourable conduct of the British Resident. The Jaipur struggle is on a very small and narrow issue. The one political association of Jaipur state has been virtually declared illegal for the offence of pleading for responsible government, and its president, himself a resident of Jaipur, has been put under a ban. The civil disobedience struggle will cease, the moment the bans are lifted and the right of free association, holding public meetings, etc., is conceded. But here again the British lion has opened out his big claws. The Indian National Congress cannot wait and watch whilst it has the power, and allow the people of Jaipur to die of mental and moral starvation, especially when this denial of a natural right is backed by British might."

On January 31, Gandhi wrote an editorial on Rajkot:

"The struggle in Rajkot has a personal touch about it for me. It was the place where I received all my education up to the matriculation examination and where my father was dewan for many years. My wife feels so much about the sufferings of the people, that though she is as old as I am and much less able than myself to brave such hardships as may be attendant upon jail life, she feels she must go to Rajkot. And before this is in print, she might have gone there.

"But I want to take a detached view of the struggle. The Sardar's statement is a legal document in the sense that it has not a superfluous word in it and contains nothing that cannot be supported by unimpeachable evidence, most of which is based on written records. It furnishes evidence of a cold-blooded breach of a solemn covenant entered into between the ruler of Rajkot and his people.

And the breach has been committed at the instance and bidding of the British Resident who is directly linked with the Viceroy.

"To the covenant, a British dewan was a party. His boast was that he represented the British authority. He had expected to rule the ruler. He was, therefore, no fool to fall into the Sardar's trap. Therefore, the covenant was not an extortion from an imbecile ruler. The British Resident detested the Congress and the Sardar for the crime of saving the Thakore Saheb from bankruptcy and, probably, the loss of his gadi. The Congress influence he could not brook. And so before the Thakore Saheb could possibly redeem his promise to his people, he made him break it. If the news that the Sardar is receiving from Rajkot is to be believed, the Resident is showing the red claws of the British lion and says in effect to the people: 'Your ruler is my creature. I have put him on the gadi and I can depose him. He knew well enough that he had acted against my wishes. I have, therefore, undone his action in coming to terms with his people. For your dealings with the Congress and the Sardar I shall teach you a lesson that you won't forget for a generation.'

"Having made the ruler a virtual prisoner, he has begun a reign of terrorism in Rajkot. Here is what the latest telegram received by the Sardar says: 'Becharbhai Jasani and other volunteers arrested. Twenty-six volunteers taken at night to a distant place in agency limits and brutally beaten. Volunteers in the villages are similarly treated. Agency police are controlling state agency and searching private houses in civil limits.'

"The British Resident is repeating the performances of British officials in British India during the civil disobedience days.

"I know that if the people of Rajkot can stand all this madness without themselves becoming mad, and meekly but resolutely and bravely suffer the inhumanities heaped upon them, they will come out victorious and, what is more, they will set free the Thakore Saheb. They will prove that they are the real rulers of Rajkot under the paramountcy of the Congress. If, however, they go mad and think of impotent retaliation and resort to acts of violence, their state will be worse than before and the paramountcy of the Congress will be of no effect. The paramountcy of the Congress avails only those who accept the banner of non-violence, even as the paramountcy of Britain avails only those who subscribe to the doctrine of 'might is right'.

"What then is the duty of the Congress when the Rajkot people have to face not the ruler and his tiny police, but the disciplined hordes of the British Empire?

"The first and natural step is for the Congress ministry to make themselves responsible for the safety and the honour of the people of Rajkot. It is true that the Government of India Act gives the ministers no power over the states. But they are governors of a mighty province in which Rajkot is but a speck. As such they have rights and duties outside the Government of India Act. And these are much the most important. Supposing that Rajkot became the place of refuge for all goondas that India could produce, supposing further that from there they carried on operations throughout India, the ministers would clearly have the right and it would be their duty to ask the paramount power through the British representative in Bombay to set things right in Rajkot. It will be the duty of the paramount power to do so or lose ministers. Every minister in his province is affected by everything that happens in territories within his geographical limit, though outside his legal jurisdiction, especially if that thing hurts his sense of decency. Responsible government in those parts may not be the ministers' concern, but if there is plague in those parts or if butchery is going on, it is very much their concern; or else their rule is a sham and a delusion. Thus the ministers in Orissa may not sit comfortably in their chairs, if they do not succeed in sending the 26,000 refugees of Talcher to their home with an absolute assurance of safety and freedom of speech and of social and political intercourse. It is insufferable that the Congress, which is today in alliance with the British Government, should be treated as an enemy and an outsider in the states which are vassals of the British.

"This wanton breach, instigated by the British Resident in Rajkot, of the charter of liberty of its people, is a wrong which must be set right at the earliest possible moment. It is like a poison corroding the whole body. Will H. E. the Viceroy realize the significance of Rajkot and remove the poison?"

The threatened crisis in Jaipur state too was looming large on the horizon and Gandhi replied to the appeals in this connection as follows:

"The appeals are unnecessary. After three months of non-violent struggle by the people of Rajkot, an honourable understanding was

arrived at between the Thakore Saheb-in-Council and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel representing the people, and the struggle was closed amidst general rejoicings. But the noble work done by the Thakore Saheb and people has been undone by the British Resident. Honour demanded that the people of Rajkot should fight unto death for the restoration of the covenant between the Thakore Saheb and his people. The struggle now is not between the ruler and his people, but in reality, it is between the Congress and the British Government represented by the Resident, who is reported to be resorting to organized goondaism. He is trying thereby to break the spirit of innocent men and women, who rightly resent the breach of faith. It is a misrepresentation to suggest that Rajkot has been made a test case. There is no planned action with reference to the Kathiawad states. What is happening is that those who feel that they are ready for suffering come to the Sardar for advice and the Sardar guides them. Rajkot seemed ready and the fight commenced there.

"Jaipur's case is incredibly simple and quite different from that of Rajkot. If my information is correct, the British Prime Minister there is determined to prevent even the movement for popularizing the ideal for responsible government. Civil disobedience in Jaipur is being, therefore, offered not for responsible government but for the removal of the bans on Praja Mandal and its president Sheth Jamnalal Bajaj.

"In my opinion, it is the duty of the Viceroy to ask the Resident in Rajkot to restore the pact and to ask the British Prime Minister of Jaipur to lift the bans. And such action by the Viceroy can in no sense be interpreted to mean an unwarranted interference in the affairs of Indian states."

Commenting on the general repressive measures in the states, Gandhi said: "It shows that there is a nefarious plot to crush the movement for liberty which at long last has commenced in some of the states. Kisses are to go hand in hand with kicks. And this reminds me of the Latin proverb which means: 'I fear the Greeks especially when they bring gifts.' Henceforth the rulers' favours are to be suspected. Reforms when they are made are to be made not for the sake of making people happy, but in order to sew the mouth with a morsel. But man's proposals are often confounded, even though his may be a crowned head. God has been found often to

have disposed of proposals in a way contrary to his expectations. If the people have shed fear and learnt the art of self-sacrifice, they need no favours. Kicks can never cow them. They will take what they need and assimilate it."

By February 1, Gandhi left Bardoli, Kasturbai was in Rajkot and Jamnalal Bajaj reached Jaipur where he was arrested. From Segaon, on February 3, Gandhi issued the following statement:

"The communiques issued by the Government of India and the Jaipur Government on my statements of Rajkot and Jaipur are remarkable for sins of omission and commission and suppression.

"It was no part of the Sardar's duty to publish the Thakore Saheb's letter about the composition of the committee. It was for the Thakore Saheb's convenience that a condition as to the composition of the committee was embodied in a separate letter. This is a well-known procedure adopted in delicate negotiations. Surely, the Thakore Saheb's understanding of his note, which admits of no double interpretation, is wholly irrelevant.

"I aver that this understanding is an afterthought, discovered to placate the Resident, who was angered that the Thakore Saheb should have dared to deal with a Congressman and give him a note of which he had no advice. Those who know anything of the Residents and states know in what dread the princes stand of even their secretaries and peons. I write from personal knowledge.

"There is sufficient in the appendices to the Sardar's statement on recrudescence of the struggle to show how the whole trouble is due to the Resident's displeasure. It is wrong to suggest that the Sardar did not give reasons for his refusal to alter the names of the committee.

"When the Thakore Saheb agreed to nominate those whom the Sardar recommended, the Musalmans and the Bhayats were before his mind's eyes. But it was common cause that all rights would be guaranteed under the reforms. The proper procedure would have been to lead evidence before the committee. I suggest that, as happens everywhere in India, the Musalman and Bhayat objection to the personnel of the committee was engineered after the event.

"I have not asked that the Thakore Saheb should be asked to do this or that. He has no will. His will is pledged to the Resident. The Thakore Saheb once dared to act against his suspected wishes. He was on the brink of losing his gadi. What I have asked is that

the Resident should restore the pact and help to honour it. If it is a matter purely of names to placate interests, I undertake to persuade the Sardar to make the accommodation, provided that all its other parts are carried out to the full.

"But the communique adroitly omits the most relevant fact that the terms of reference have been altered out of shape. These were agreed to by the Thakore Saheb-in-Council, of which the British dewan was a member. I have never known such a dishonourable breach of a pact signed on behalf of a chief. I do suggest that the Resident, who should be the custodian of the honour of the chiefs within his jurisdiction, has in this case, dragged the name of the Thakore Saheb in the dust.

"I repeat the charge of organized goondaism. The agency police are operating in Rajkot. Wires received by the Sardar show that civil resisters are taken to distant places, they are stripped naked, beaten and left to their own resources. They show further that the Red Cross doctors and the ambulance parties have been prevented from rendering help to those who were injured by lathi charges in Halenda. I call this organized goondaism. If the charges are denied, there should be an impartial inquiry.

"Let me state here the issue clearly. I seek no interference in the affairs of the state. I seek non-interference by the Resident in Rajkot. The Resident is directly responsible for the strained relations between the state and the people. It is, therefore, the duty of the paramount power to see that the solemn pact is fulfilled to the letter and in spirit.

"If the objection about the Muslim and Bhayat representation has any honesty about it, it can be removed. I once more appeal to His Excellency the Viceroy to study the question more deeply than he has done. Let not a grave tragedy be enacted while whitewashing communiques are being forged in the Delhi secretariat. This is not a war of words. It is a war in which the people who have hitherto never been to jail nor suffered lathi blows are exposing themselves to all risk.

"As for Jaipur, I have only one word. I do know that the British Prime Minister is one member of the Jaipur State Council. My submission is that he is all in all. He has vowed vengeance against Praja Mandal and Sheth Jamnalalji. And in spite of the forest of words about action in respect of Praja Mandal, I claim that

virtually it is declared illegal. If not, let the authorities leave Sheth Jamnalalji free to enter Jaipur and let him and his *mandal* educate unmolested the people in the art of responsible government. Let them be punished if they inculcate violence, directly or indirectly."

On the arrest of Kasturbai, Gandhi wrote:

"I had not intended to say anything about my wife having joined the Rajkot struggle. But some cruel criticism I have seen about her intervention prompts an explanation. It had never occurred to me that she should join it. For, she is too old for such hardships as are involved in being in civil disobedience struggles. But strange as it may appear to critics, they must believe me when I say that though she is illiterate, she is and has been for years absolutely free to do what she likes. When she joined the struggle in South Africa or in India, it was of her own inner prompting. And so it was this time. When she heard of Manibehn's arrest, she could not restrain herself and asked me to let her go. I said she was too weak. She had just then fainted in her bath-room in Delhi and might have died but for Devadas' presence of mind. She said she did not mind. I referred her to the Sardar. He would not hear of it either.

"But this time he melted. He had seen my grief over the breach of faith by the Thakore Saheb and induced by the Resident. The reader must realize my ancestral connection with Rajkot and the intimate personal relations I had with the present ruler's father. Kasturba is a daughter of Rajkot. She felt a personal call. She could not sit still whilst the other daughters of Rajkot were suffering for the freedom of men and women of the state. Rajkot is no doubt an insignificant place on the map of India. But it is not insignificant for her and me. As a child she was brought up in Rajkot though born in Porbandar. After all, neither she nor I can be unconcerned in a struggle which is based on non-violence and in which so many reliable co-workers are involved.

"The success of the struggle in Rajkot will be a stage forward in the fight for freedom. And when it ends in success, as it must, sooner or later, I hope that Kasturba's share will count as a humble contribution towards it. Satyagraha is a struggle in which the oldest and the weakest in body may take part, if they have stout hearts."

Gandhi would have preferred to be in Rajkot but an urgent business had brought him to Segaon. Seventy-five delegates sent by the various provincial governments and a few states and national

educational institutions had completed their three weeks' course at the teachers' training centre at Wardha. Before returning to their respective provinces, they wanted to meet Gandhi and have a talk with him, which was fixed for the 3rd and 4th of February. Gandhi in his discourse explained to the assembled how the mind could be trained through the hands:

"The old idea was to add a handicraft to the ordinary curriculum of education followed in schools. That is to say, the craft was to be taken in hand wholly separately from education. To me, that seems a fatal mistake. The teacher must learn the craft and correlate his knowledge to the craft, so that he will impart all that he chooses.

"Take the instance of spinning. Unless I know arithmetic, I cannot report how many yards of yarn I have produced on *takli*, or how many standard rounds it will make, or what is the count of the yarn that I have spun. I must learn figures to be able to do so, I also must learn addition and subtraction and multiplication and division. In dealing with complicated sums, I shall have to use symbols and so I get my algebra. Even here, I would insist on the use of Hindustani letters instead of Roman.

"Take geometry next. What can be a better demonstration than the disc of the *takli*? I can teach all about the circle in this way, without even mentioning the name of Euclid.

"Again you may ask how can I teach my child geography and history through spinning. Some time ago, I came across a book entitled *Cotton—The Story of Mankind*. It began with the history of ancient times, how and when cotton was first grown, the stages of its development, the cotton trade between the different countries, and so on. As I mention the different countries to the child, I shall naturally tell him something about the history and geography of those countries. Under whose reign the different commercial treaties were signed during the different periods? Why can every country not grow the cotton it requires? That will lead me in economics and elements of agriculture. I shall teach him to know the different varieties of cotton, in what kind of soil they grow, how to grow them, from where to get them, and so on. Thus *takli*-spinning leads me into the whole history of the East India Company, what brought them here, how they destroyed our spinning industry, how the economic motive that brought them to India led them to entertain political aspirations, how it became a causative factor in

the downfall of the Moguls and the Marathas, in the establishment of the English raj, and then again in the awakening of the masses in our times. There is thus no end to the educative possibilities of this new educational scheme. And how much quicker the child will learn all that, without putting an unnecessary tax on his mind and memory.

"Let me further elaborate the idea. Just as a biologist, in order to become a good biologist, must learn many other sciences besides biology, the basic education, if it is treated as a science, takes us into the interminable channels of learning. To extend the example of the *takli*, a pupil teacher, who rivets his attention not merely on the mechanical process of spinning, which, of course, he must master, but on the spirit of the thing, will concentrate on the *takli* and its various aspects. He will ask himself why the *takli* is made out of a brass disc and has a steel spindle. The original *takli* had its disc made anyhow. The still more primitive *takli* consisted of a wooden spindle with a disc of slate or of clay. The *takli* has been developed scientifically, and there is a reason for making the disc out of brass and the spindle out of steel. He must try to find out that reason. Then, he must ask himself why the disc has that particular diameter, no more and no less. When he has solved these questions scientifically and has gone into the mathematics of the thing, your pupil becomes a good engineer. The *takli* becomes his Kamadhenu, the 'cow of plenty'. There is no limit to the possibilities of knowledge that can be imparted through this medium. It will be limited only by the energy and conviction with which you work. You have been here for three weeks. You will have spent them usefully if it has enabled you to take to this scheme seriously so that you will say to yourself, 'I shall either do or die.' "

"What we need," he added, "is educationists with originality, fired with true zeal, who will think out from day to day what they are going to teach their pupils. The teacher can't get this knowledge through the musty volumes. He has to use his own faculties of observation and thinking and impart his knowledge to the children through his lips, with the help of a craft. This means a revolution in the method of teaching, a revolution in the teacher's outlook. Up till now, you have been guided by inspectors' reports. You wanted to do what the inspector might like, so that you might get more money for your institutions or higher salaries for yourselves.

But the new teacher will not care for all that. He will say, 'I have done my duty by my pupil if I have made him a better man and in doing so I have used all my resources. That is enough for me.' "

Then followed questions and answers. Some one asked Gandhi if the central idea behind the scheme was that teachers should not speak a word to the pupils that could not be correlated to the *takli*. "This is a libel on me," he replied. "It is true I have said that all instruction must be linked with some basic craft. When you are imparting knowledge to a child of seven or ten through the medium of an industry, you should, to begin with, exclude those subjects which cannot be linked with the craft. By doing so from day to day you will discover ways and means of linking with the craft many things which you had excluded in the beginning. You will save your energy and the pupils', if you follow this process of exclusion to begin with. We have today no books to go by and no precedents to guide us. Therefore, we have to go slow. The main thing is that the teacher should retain his freshness of mind. If you come across something that you cannot correlate with the craft, do not fret over it and get disheartened. Leave it, and go ahead with the subjects that you can correlate. Maybe, another teacher will hit upon the right way and show how it can be correlated. And when you have pooled the experience of many, you will have books to guide you, so that the work of those who follow you will become easier.

"How long, you will ask, are we to go on with this process of exclusion? My reply is, for the whole lifetime. At the end you will find that you have included many things that you had excluded at first, that practically all that was worth including has been included, and whatever you have been obliged to exclude till the end was something very superficial that deserved exclusion. This has been my experience of life. I would not have been able to do many things that I have done, if I had not excluded an equal number.

"Our education has to be revolutionized. The brain should be educated through the hand. If I were a poet, I could write poetry on the possibilities of the five fingers. Why should you think that the mind is everything and the hands and feet nothing? Those who don't train their hands, who go through the ordinary rut of education, lack 'music' in their life. All their faculties are not trained. Mere book knowledge does not interest the child, so as to hold his attention fully. The brain gets weary of mere words, and the child's

mind begins to wander. The hand does the thing it ought not to do, the eye sees the things it ought not to see, the ear hears the things it ought not to hear, and they do not do, see, or hear, respectively, what they ought to. They are not taught to make the right choice and so their education often proves their ruin. An education which does not teach us to discriminate between good and bad, to assimilate the one and eschew the other, is a misnomer."

At the end of the question hour, Gandhi said: "Many questions show that many of you are filled with doubts. This is wrong way of going about the work. You should have robust faith. If you have the conviction that I have, that Wardha education is the thing required to give training for life to millions of our children, your work will flourish. If you have not that faith, there is something wrong with those in charge of your training. They should be able to imbue you with this faith, whatever else they may or may not give you."

After this short interlude, Gandhi again turned his attention to the states and other topical questions of the day. Commenting on "Mahatma's statue", he wrote: "Correspondence has been pouring in, protesting against the Mahatma's statue said to be in course of construction on the Congress ground at a cost of Rs. 25,000. I know nothing of this statue. I have inquired about it. But I must not wait for confirmation. Assuming that such a statue is in course of construction, I reinforce the protest of my correspondents and I agree with them that it will be a waste of good money to spend Rs. 25,000 on erecting a clay or metallic statue of the figure of a man who is himself made of clay and is more fragile than a bangle which can keep by preservation for a thousand years, whereas the human body disintegrates daily and undergoes final disintegration after the usual span of life. I have learnt from my Muslim friends, among whom I have passed the best part of life, my dislike of the statues and photographs of my figure. And I should like the reception committee, if the report is true, to desist from the unfortunate enterprise. Let them save what money they can. If it is a mere rumour, let these lines serve as a warning to those who want to honour me by erecting statues and having portraits of my figure, that I heartily dislike these exhibitions. I shall deem it ample honour if those who believe in me will be good enough to promote the activities I stand for and at least divert the money they would use

for statues and portraits to the work of the Harijan Sevak Sangh, the A.-I.S.A., the A.-I.V.I.A., or Hindustani Talimi Sangh."

On February 5, he wrote on "Roman Script *v.* Devanagari":

"I understand that some of the tribes in Assam are being taught to read and write through the Roman script instead of Devanagari. I have already expressed my opinion that the only script that is likely to be universal in India is Devanagari, whether reformed or as it is. Urdu or Persian will go hand in hand, unless Muslims of their own free will acknowledge the superiority of Devanagari from a purely scientific and national standpoint. But this is irrelevant to the present problem. The Roman cannot go hand in hand with the other two scripts. Protagonists of the Roman script would displace both. But sentiment and science alike are against the Roman script. Its sole merit is its convenience for printing and typing purposes. But that is nothing compared to the strain its learning would put upon the millions. It can be of no help to the millions who have to read their own literature, either in their own provincial scripts or in Devanagari. Devanagari is easier for the millions of Hindus and even Muslims to learn, because the provincial scripts are mostly derived from Devanagari. I have included Muslims advisedly. The mother tongue of Bengali Muslims, for instance, is Bengali, as is Tamil of Tamil Muslims. The present movement for the propagation of Urdu will, as it should, result in Muslims all over India learning Urdu in addition to their own mother tongue. They must, in any case, know Arabic for the purpose of learning the Koran. But the millions, whether Hindus or Muslims, will never need the Roman script, except when they wish to learn English. Similarly Hindus who want to read their scriptures in the original have to and do learn the Devanagari script. The movement for universalizing the Devanagari script has thus a sound basis. The introduction of Roman script is a super-imposition which can never become popular. All super-impositions will be swept out of existence when the true mass awakening comes, as it is coming, much sooner than any one of us can expect from known causes. Yet the awakening of millions does take time. It cannot be manufactured. It comes or seems to come mysteriously. National workers can merely hasten the process of anticipating the mass mind."

From Kashmir to Mysore, there was an unprecedented stir in the Indian states. The Viceroy undertook a tour of the states and

the princes announced reforms simultaneously suppressing people's movements and organizations. On February 9, Gandhi wrote:

"The more I think of what is happening in the states in India, I see nothing but a dark future for this unhappy land if the paramount power remains a helpless witness of the tragedy that is being enacted in Princes' India. For, what is happening in Rajkot and Jaipur is but a sample of what is going to happen presently in the other states.

"The Maharaja of Bikaner was right when he advised concerted action among the princes. Only His Highness gave the wrong lead. The doctrine of kicks and kisses will lead the princes nowhere. He has shown bitterness and strife. The people of the states may not be able to take concerted action as the princes can, but the latter will not be able to treat the people from the states other than their own or those from British India as foreigners. There is sufficient awakening among the people of the states to withstand the pressure even from concerted unity among the princes."

On February 13, in the course of an editorial on Travancore, he wrote: "Repression is taking place in the name of Hinduism and for the sake of saving a Hindu state! It has been suggested that the idea is to repress the Christians, who are playing a prominent part in the struggle for freedom. It is surely late in the day, to talk of Hindu states and Muslim states. And what is the test? Is Kashmir a Hindu state, because a Hindu prince happens to rule a territory which has an overwhelming majority of Muslims as its inhabitants? Or is Hyderabad with its overwhelming population a Muslim state because a Muslim prince rules their destiny? I regard this kind of talk as a libel on nationalism. Is India a Christian state, because a Christian king rules over her destiny? But if India is Indian, no matter who rules, states are also Indian, no matter who happens to be the ruler. And the present rulers and their successors will rule only by the grace of an awakened people. The awakening that has taken place has come to stay. Every day quickens the pace. The rulers and their advisers may succeed for the time being in suppressing the spirit of the people. But they will never succeed in killing it. To succeed will be to kill the spirit of the people of India. Is anyone in India so short-sighted as to feel that independence is not coming soon? Is it possible to conceive that an independent India will for one moment tolerate repression in any single spot, be it ever so big or ever so small? There is room in my conception

of an independent India, for states with princes as constitutional trustees, as in Aundh. There is room for Englishmen as the fellow servants of the people, never as masters. Therefore, the only way in which the princes can live in a free India is for them now to recognize the time spirit, bow to it and act accordingly."

The crisis was developing in the states and Gandhi took the lead. The other issues, such as the federation, hung in the air. In mid-February, Bose arrived at Segaon for consultation, a month after the stormy presidential election. His interview with Gandhi lasted for three hours and certain tentative conclusions were reached but no final decisions were arrived at. It was also announced at the same time that the Working Committee would meet at Wardha on February 22, to discuss the agenda of the forthcoming annual session of the Congress. In view of this, Gandhi agreed to postpone his departure for Bardoli.

On his return to Calcutta, President Bose fell seriously ill and he could not attend the meeting of the Working Committee at Segaon. The president sent a telegram asking for a postponement of the meeting and not permitting it to transact any business in his absence. On February 22, the resignation of twelve members of the Working Committee—Sardar Patel, Maulana Azad, Rajendra Prasad, Mrs. Naidu, Bhulabhai Desai, Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, Shankarrao Deo, Mahtab, Kripalani, Daulatram, Bajaj and Ghaffar Khan—followed by that of Jawaharlal Nehru, came as an unpleasant surprise to the public. In their letter believed to have been drafted by Gandhi, Azad and eleven others informed the president of their decision to resign: "We feel that the time has come when the country should have a clear-cut policy not based on compromise between different incompatible groups of the Congress. It is but right, therefore, that you should select a homogeneous cabinet, representing the views of the majority."

Nehru prefaced his resignation with a covering letter. It revealed that he had tried his best to bring about a compromise. He had pressed President Bose to withdraw the charges made by him in his pre-election statements with regard to the rightists compromising with the British Government on the question of federation. And as this was not forthcoming, that fact must have influenced the thirteen members of the Working Committee to submit their resignations, and Gandhi to approve of it.

Gandhi turned his attention once more to Rajkot. The detention of Kasturbai had produced a fresh clash resulting in many arrests. There were charges of terrorism against the state police and authorities, and countercharges of fabrication by the state. From Segaon, on February 23, Gandhi issued the following statement:

"I continue to receive daily wires about hunger-strikes in Rajkot over the treatment, said to be inhuman, of prisoners and others in villages. The Rajkot matter is becoming daily graver because of the breach of faith on the ruler's part with which the second struggle started. Agitated inquirers should know that I am in telegraphic correspondence with the authorities. I hope to take them into confidence in the near future. In the meantime, let satyagrahis understand that the first thing they have to show is an infinite capacity for suffering with inward joy and without malice or anger."

On February 25, Gandhi published the telegrams exchanged between himself and the First Member of the Rajkot State Council, who wrote, "No truth absolutely whatsoever regarding ill-treatment to prisoners."

Gandhi replied: "Thanks. You are silent about hunger-strike. Have again long wire about atrocities which difficult to disbelieve. Every day urge growing that I should myself plunge. Agony of ruler's breach of faith, coupled with growing tales of terrorism becoming unbearable. Have no desire embarrass the Thakore Saheb or council. Would like you listen to voice of old man claiming to be Rajkot's friend."

The ruler's reply was: "Assure you everything humanly possible being done. Please have no anxiety."

Gandhi wrote: "If all reports are fabrication, it is serious for me and co-workers. If there is substance in them, it is serious reflection on state authorities. Meanwhile, the hunger-strike continues. My anxiety is unbearable. Therefore, I propose to start for Rajkot tomorrow night, taking with me medical attendant, secretary and typist. I come in search of truth and as peacemaker. Have no desire to court arrest. I want to see things for myself and shall make ample amends, if my co-workers have been guilty of fabrication. I shall also plead with the Thakore Saheb to repair breach of faith with his people. I shall ask people to avoid demonstrations and am asking the Sardar, pending my effort in Rajkot, to suspend satyagraha by persons in Rajkot or from outside. If by any chance, the Thakore

Saheb and council can restore pact intact, subject to adjustment of members, and prisoners are immediately set free and fines restored, I naturally cancel my proposed departure. You can send any official with full authority to negotiate adjustment as to personnel. Majority of Sardar Patel's nominees will be a condition. May God guide the Thakore Saheb and his councillors. May I expect express wire?"

The reply was: "Since your telegram, you must have received the information that hunger-strike has been discontinued since last night. His Highness does not consider there has been any breach of faith on his part and is only anxious that representative committee appointed by him should be able to start working in a calm atmosphere, so that he may be in a position to introduce as soon as possible such reform as may be found by him to be required after fully considering the committee's recommendations. His Highness feels sure that in circumstances explained, you will appreciate that no useful purpose could be served by your coming here now. He wires once again to assure you that no atrocities or terrorism have been or will be allowed."

"Your wire is no answer to my heart-felt entreaty," wrote Gandhi on February 25. "I leave for Rajkot today on my mission of peace." In the course of the statement, he said:

"These wires tell their own tale. I am glad that the fast is broken. That removes one cause of anxiety. But the charge of fabrication abides. I know personally many of the workers in Rajkot. They and I must make full reparation, if they have resorted to falsehood, in order to make out a case of atrocities against the authorities. The struggle in Rajkot, as in other states, is part of the struggle for the liberation of India. Mutual mud-slinging can't advance the cause. Truth must be ascertained.

"The telegram of the First Member denies the charge of breach of faith. It baffles me. I do not know what is meant by the denial. The notification announcing the pact and the notification announcing the breach with Sardar Patel are clearly contradictory, as one reads the plain language of the two.

"I have suggested that the Resident at Rajkot is responsible for the breach. I have been told that I have been hasty in bringing this charge and that there is another side. If there is, it is my duty to know it. I shall make it a point to seek an interview with him and, if I find that I have done an injustice to him, I shall tender a public

apology. I feel that it is wrong on my part to allow the sufferings to continue in the midst of mutual recriminations. The least I can do is to go to Rajkot and find out the truth and invite the Thakore Saheb to repair what is a palpable breach of faith, unless I discover that the repudiation of this charge is somehow justified.

"If the statements made by the workers about the atrocities are true, there must be found a way of avoiding such exhibitions of man's worst passions. He must be helped against himself, if it is at all possible. It is part of the struggle for liberty, if it is non-violent, to reclaim even goondas, whether they are to be found among the people or those in authority. By going to Rajkot, I want to exert myself to the utmost of my capacity and find out the way of dealing with the goonda element in society. In this respect, Rajkot is a test case. I go to Rajkot because I am the same friend of the states that I have always claimed to be.

"It hurts me that by force of circumstances, all of which perhaps I do not know, the ruler of Rajkot has been made to break his word given to his people. I hold that it is the duty of the princes of Kathiawad, if not of all India, and their advisers to help to rectify the wrong if it is one. An honourable mutual understanding is impossible, if faith becomes a valueless article. Life to me becomes a burden, when I find myself witness of a breach of faith as it happens to be in this case. Let it be recalled that I was the author of the draft that the ruler of Rajkot signed with but a slight modification. I know that Sardar Vallabhbhai left no stone unturned to ensure that it was signed with the fullest understanding.

"As I go to Rajkot purely as a messenger of peace, I have asked Sardar Patel to suspend the Rajkot civil resistance, whilst under God's guidance, I make the humble effort to end the agony. The public will please remember that I am an invalid, so far as the body is concerned. They will avoid demonstrations at the stations. Though Rajkot is a tiny place on the map of India, the principle for the vindication of which I go to Rajkot is one without which society must disintegrate."

Gandhi refused to allow Pyarelal to publish the note about his health which was very unsatisfactory. The doctors had ordered an absolute rest from physical and mental work. All journeyings were forbidden, and even the usual morning and evening walks were interdicted. Rajkot was straining Gandhi's endurance almost to the

breaking point. No more could he remain at Segaon and direct the movement from there.

On the way to Rajkot, on February 27, Gandhi addressed the following letter to Mahadev Desai: "How mysterious are the ways of God! This journey to Rajkot is a wonder even to me. Why am I going? What for? I have thought nothing of these things. And if God guides me, what should I think, why should I think? Even thought may be an obstacle in the way of His guidance. The fact is, it takes no effort to stop thinking. The thoughts do not come. Indeed, there is no vacuum—but I mean to say that there is no thought about the mission."

Fast

1939

ON HIS arrival at Rajkot on February 28, 1939, Gandhi visited the jails and entered into discussions with the authorities. His visits to prisoners confirmed his belief that the repressive measures of the state had been severe and indefensible. His conversations with the ruler, with Durbar Virawala, and with the British Resident began well and ended badly.

On hearing the rumour that Gandhi had decided to enter upon a fast if his request contained in a letter addressed to the Thakore Saheb was not complied with, a group of press correspondents approached Gandhi on March 2 to ask if he could throw some light on the subject. In reply, he said:

"I am sorry to have to say 'yes' in answer to your question. I am also sorry that the information has leaked out before its time. I do not wish as yet to publish my letter. All that I would like to say at this critical juncture is that it cost me a night's rest before I came to the conclusion that if the suspended struggle was not to be revived, and if the atrocities of which I have heard so much and of which I was obliged to make mention in my press note were also not to be revived, I must adopt some effective remedy to end the agony, and God gave me the remedy.

"The public should not laugh at my connecting God with the proposed step. Rightly or wrongly, I know that I have no other resource as a satyagrahi than the assistance of God in every conceivable difficulty, and I would like it to be believed that what may appear to be inexplicable actions of mine are really due to inner promptings.

"It may be a product of my heated imagination. If it is so, I prize that imagination, as it has served me for a chequered life extending over a period of nearly over fifty-five years, because I learned to rely consciously upon God before I was fifteen years old.

"And one thing more. The weapon of fasting I know, cannot be lightly wielded. It can easily savour of violence unless it is used by one skilled in the art. I claim to be such an artist in this subject.

"It should be remembered that I am intimately connected with Rajkot and its rulers. Regarding the Thakore Saheb as my own son, I have every right to evoke the best in his nature by means of self-suffering. If my fast, which I hope will be avoided, is to be interpreted as pressure, I can only say that such moral pressure should be welcomed by all concerned.

"A breach of promise shakes me to my root, especially when I am in any way connected with the author of the breach. And if it cost my life, which after all at the age of seventy has no insurance value, I should most willingly give it, in order to secure due performance of a sacred and solemn promise."

On March 2, Gandhi addressed a letter to the Thakore Saheb in Gujarati:

"I write this letter not without hesitation, but duty compels it. You know the reason for my coming here. For three days, I had conversation with Durbar Virawala. He gave me cause for intense dissatisfaction. He seems to be incapable of keeping his resolutions from moment to moment. Such is my opinion based upon my three days' contact with him. In my opinion, his guidance has harmed the state.

"Now I come to the object of this letter. At the time of leaving Wardha, I had resolved that I would not leave Rajkot without inducing fulfilment of your promise. But I had never thought that I would have to be here for more than one or two days or that I would have to suffer what I have suffered.

"My patience is exhausted. I should hasten to Tripuri, if it is at all possible. If I do not go, over a thousand co-workers will be disappointed and lakhs of poor people will become disconsolate. Time, therefore, has a special value for me at this juncture.

"I beseech you, therefore, to adopt with a full heart the following suggestions of mine and free me from anxiety by speeding me on my return journey tomorrow.

"1. You should announce to the people that your notification No. 50, dated 26th December, stands.

"2. You should cancel your notification No. 61 of 21st January. Names 2, 3, 5, and 7 of the reforms committee announced by you

should stand and you should accept on behalf of the Rajkot Rajkiya Praja Parishad the following names: (1) U. N. Dhebar, (2) P. P. Ananda, (3) V. M. Shukla, (4) J. H. Joshi, (5) S. V. Modi. The underlying motive of this suggestion is that the *parishad* should have a majority on its side.

"3. Shri U. N. Dhebar should be appointed as president of the committee.

"4. You should appoint three or less than three officials as guides and advisers to the committee. They should be such as I could accept on behalf of the *parishad.* They have no vote in the proceedings of the committee.

"5. You should issue instructions to the heads of several departments of the state to furnish to the committee such papers, figures and other material and assistance as it may need. You should appoint for the use of the committee suitable quarters in the secretariat.

"6. My advice is that the advisers whom you may appoint in terms of clause 4 should form the Executive Council and that council should be responsible for management of the state in the spirit of the notification of the 26th December, so as not to do anything likely to be injurious to its main purpose. One of them should be the president of the council. You will unhesitatingly endorse the actions of the council. If you deem it fit to appoint persons other than the advisers of the committee as councillors, the appointment should be made in consultation with me.

"The committee should commence its proceedings on the 7th and finish them by the 22nd. The enforcement of recommendations of the committee should take place within seven days of their being in your hands.

"7. The satyagrahi prisoners should be discharged tomorrow. Fines and execution orders should be stopped and fines already collected and confiscations should be returned.

"I gather from the conversation with Mr. Gibson that he will not interfere with whatever you may do in connection with the notification of the 26th December.

"If you can't see your way to accept my suggestions before noon tomorrow, my fast will commence from that time and will continue till after acceptance.

"I trust that you will not regard the language of my letter to be stiff. If I do use stiff language or my action appears to be such, I

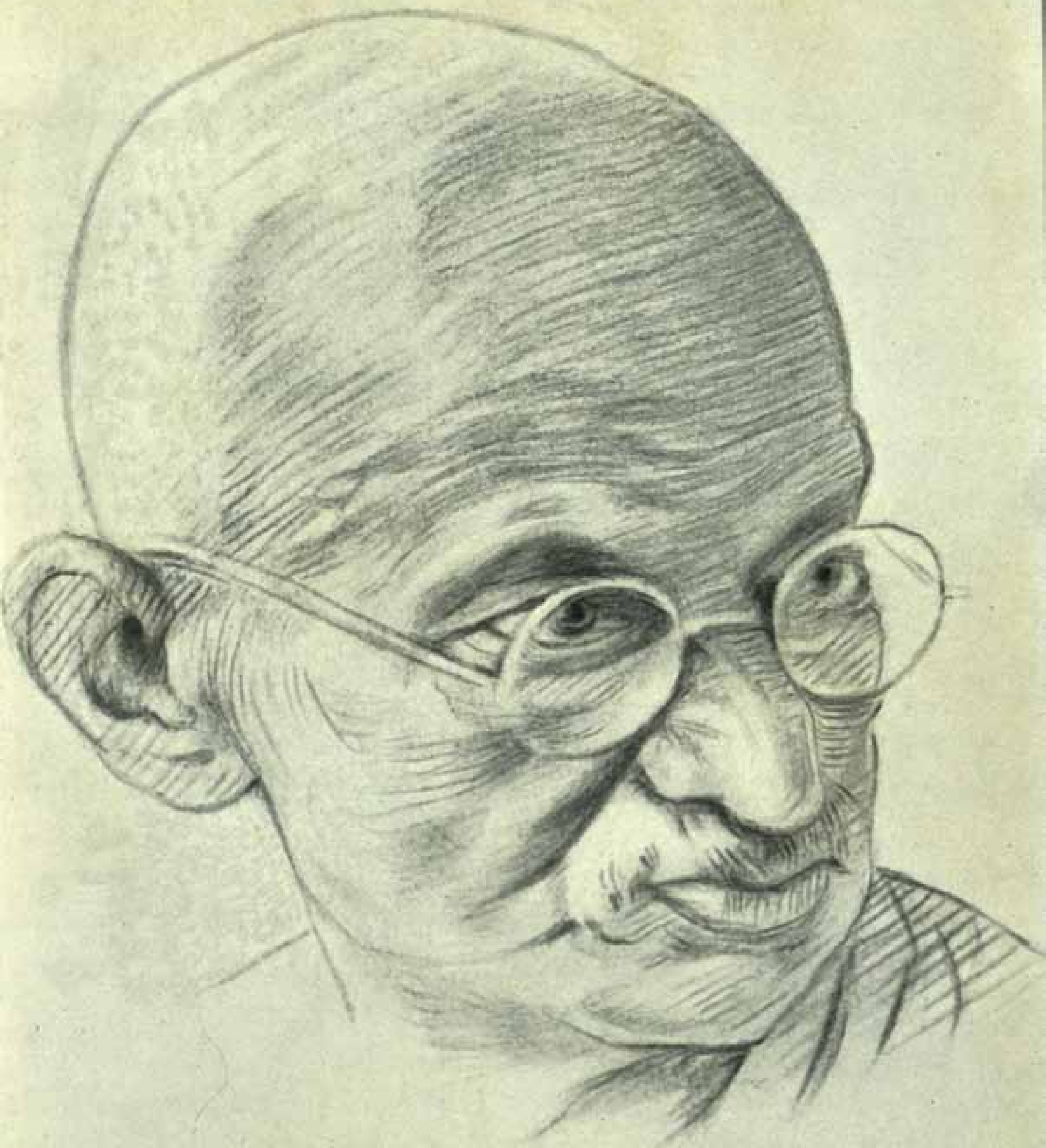
claim that right in connection with you. My father had the privilege of serving the state when your grandfather was its chief. Your father regarded me as father to him. Indeed, at a public meeting he called me even his guru, but I have been guru to no one; therefore, I have never regarded him as disciple. You are, therefore, as son to me. It is possible that you do not regard me as father. If you do, you will accept joyfully my submission in a moment and, in addition, you will express your regret for what has befallen your people after December 26. You will please not consider me your or the state's enemy. I can never be anybody's enemy and have never been. I have implicit faith that in acceptance of my submission to you lies your good, your prestige, your duty. If you will observe that in some of my suggestions I have gone outside the four corners of the notification of the 26th December, such departure will be found to be merely superficial. You will note that in not interfering with your nominations of the persons outside the *parishad*, I have had solely in view your prestige. Thus the departure is purely in favour of the state. If the other departures may not be so considered, they are solely due to what I have considered your breach of promise. In my view, they are for the protection of both the parties and the people, and for the purpose of preventing another breakdown of the settlement.

"In conclusion, I give you my word of honour that if I am then alive, I shall critically examine the report that the reforms committee may prepare. If, I am not, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel may do so, and the examination will be such as to make sure that no damage is done to your prestige or to the state or your people.

"I am sending a copy of your letter to Mr. Gibson. I am not handing this letter to the press and I entertain the hope that you will kindly adopt my suggestion, so that I may never have to publish this letter.

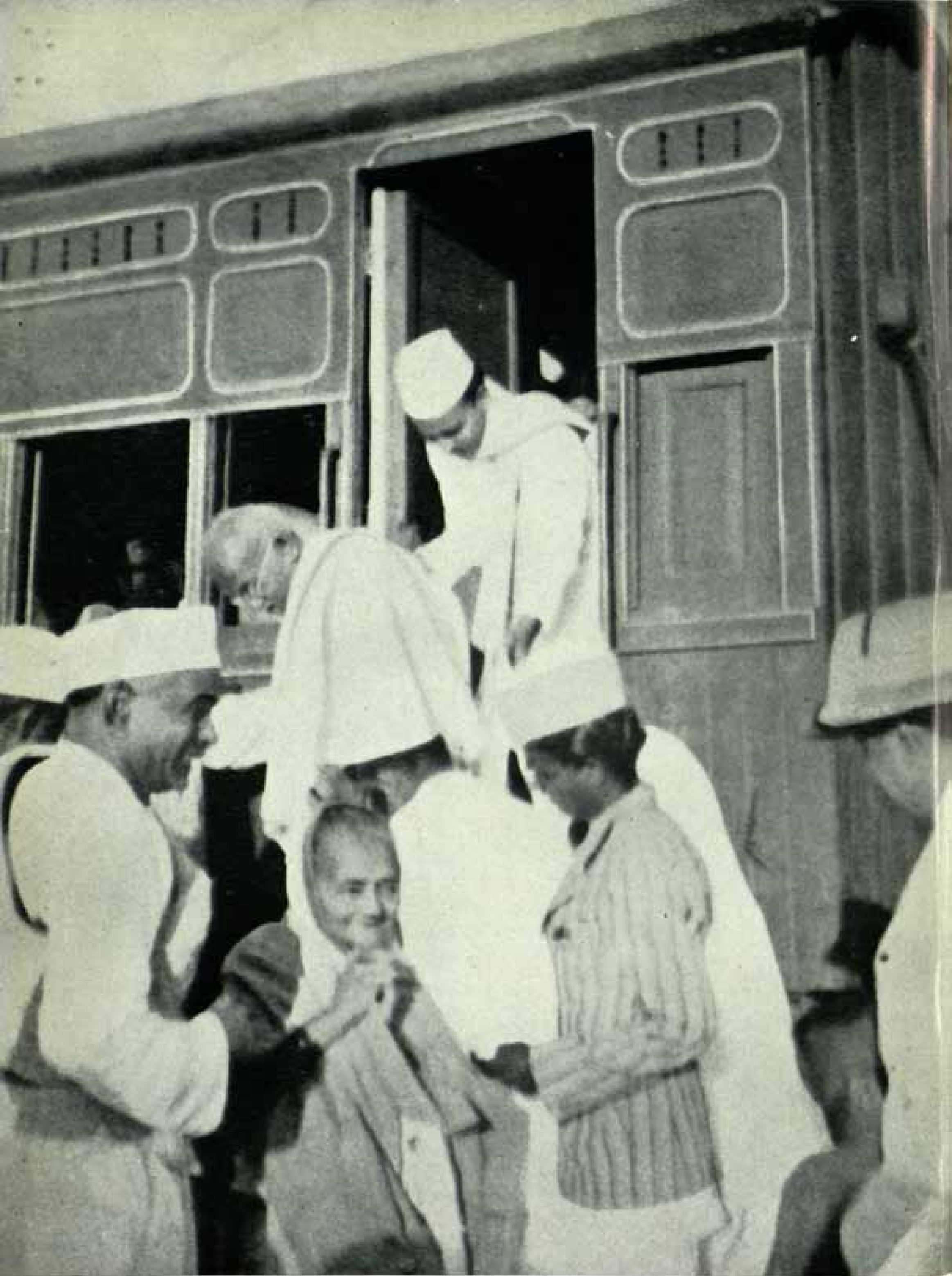
"May God bless you and give you right guidance. Blessing from Mohandas."

On March 3, it became known publicly that Gandhi had resolved to fast to death, unless the pledge was honoured. The fast was to begin at noon and the reply from the Thakore Saheb did not yet arrive till one minute to twelve. Gandhi was going to hand over the text of the letter to the press, but he had his favourite hymn "Vaishnavajan" sung first. At the end of it, he released to the press



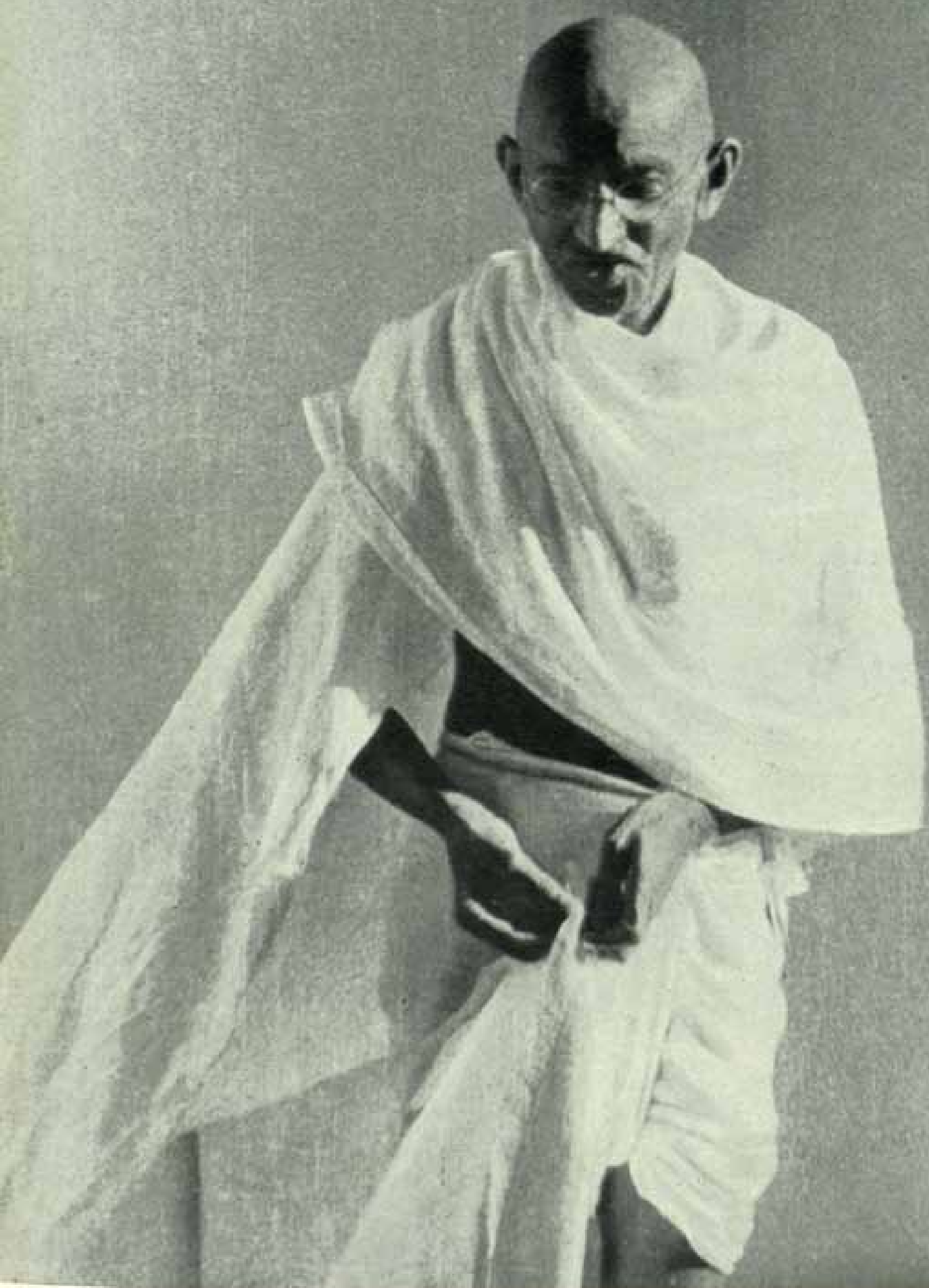
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A sketch of Gandhi, 1939



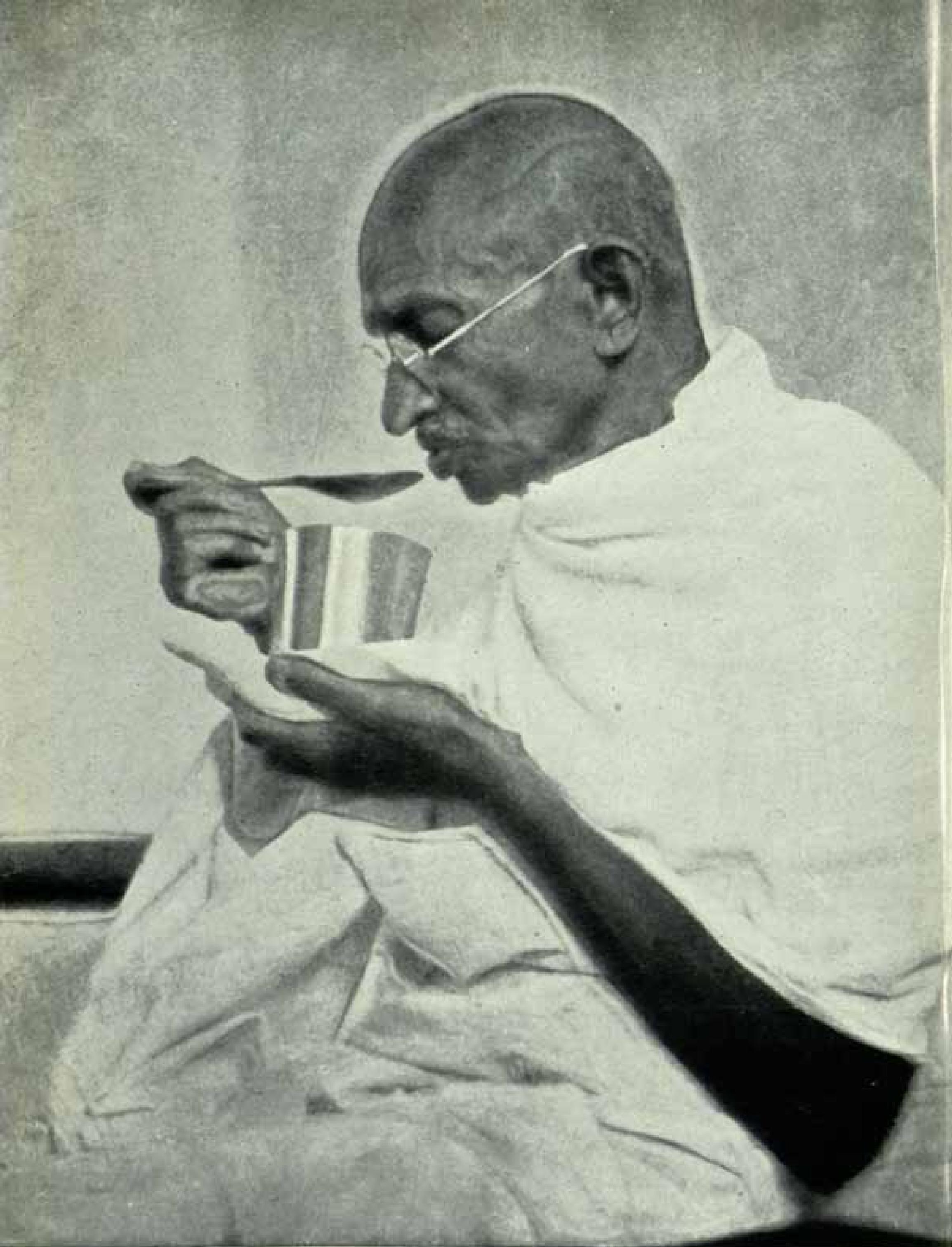
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Gandhi's arrival at Rajkot, February 28, 1939



Courtesy : N. Jasani

In Rajkot, March 1939

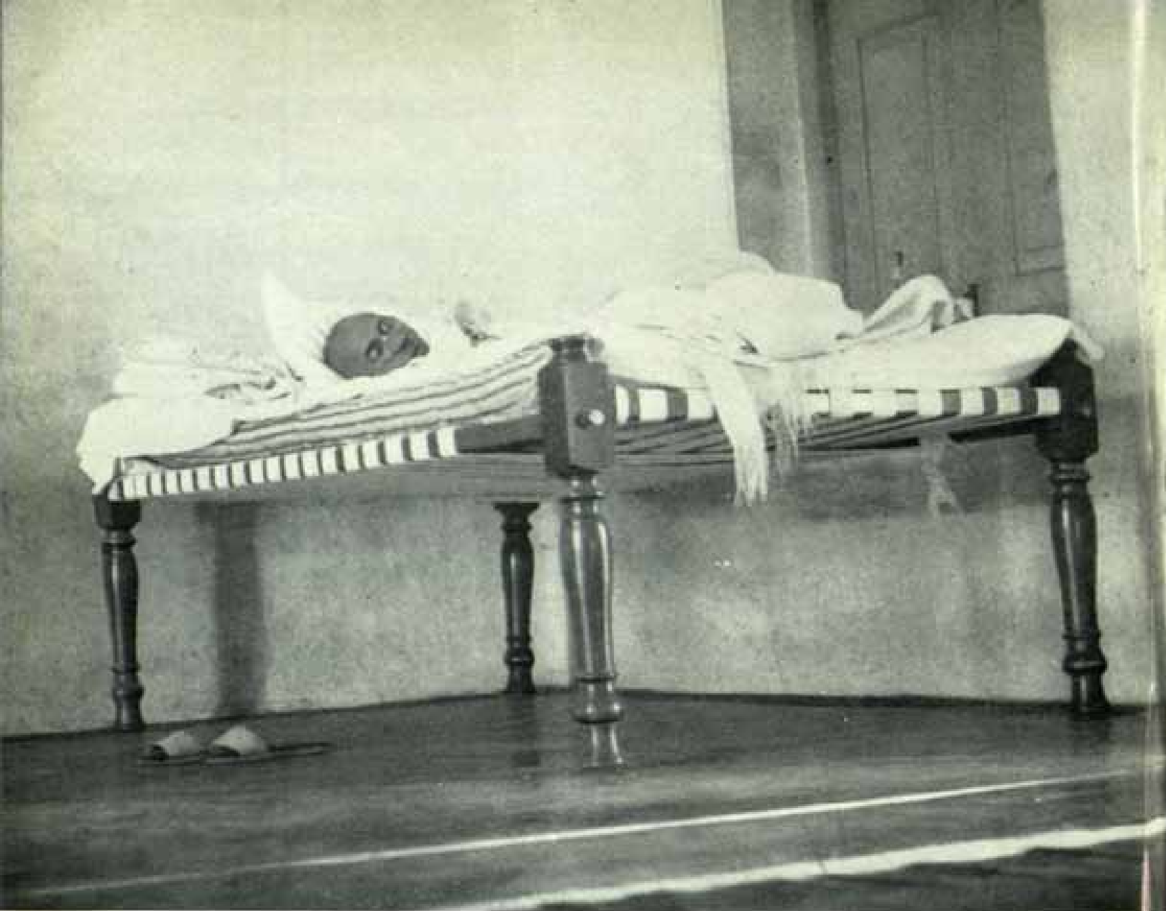


Photograph : Kanu Gandhi

Gandhi's last meal before the fast, Rajkot, March 3, 1939

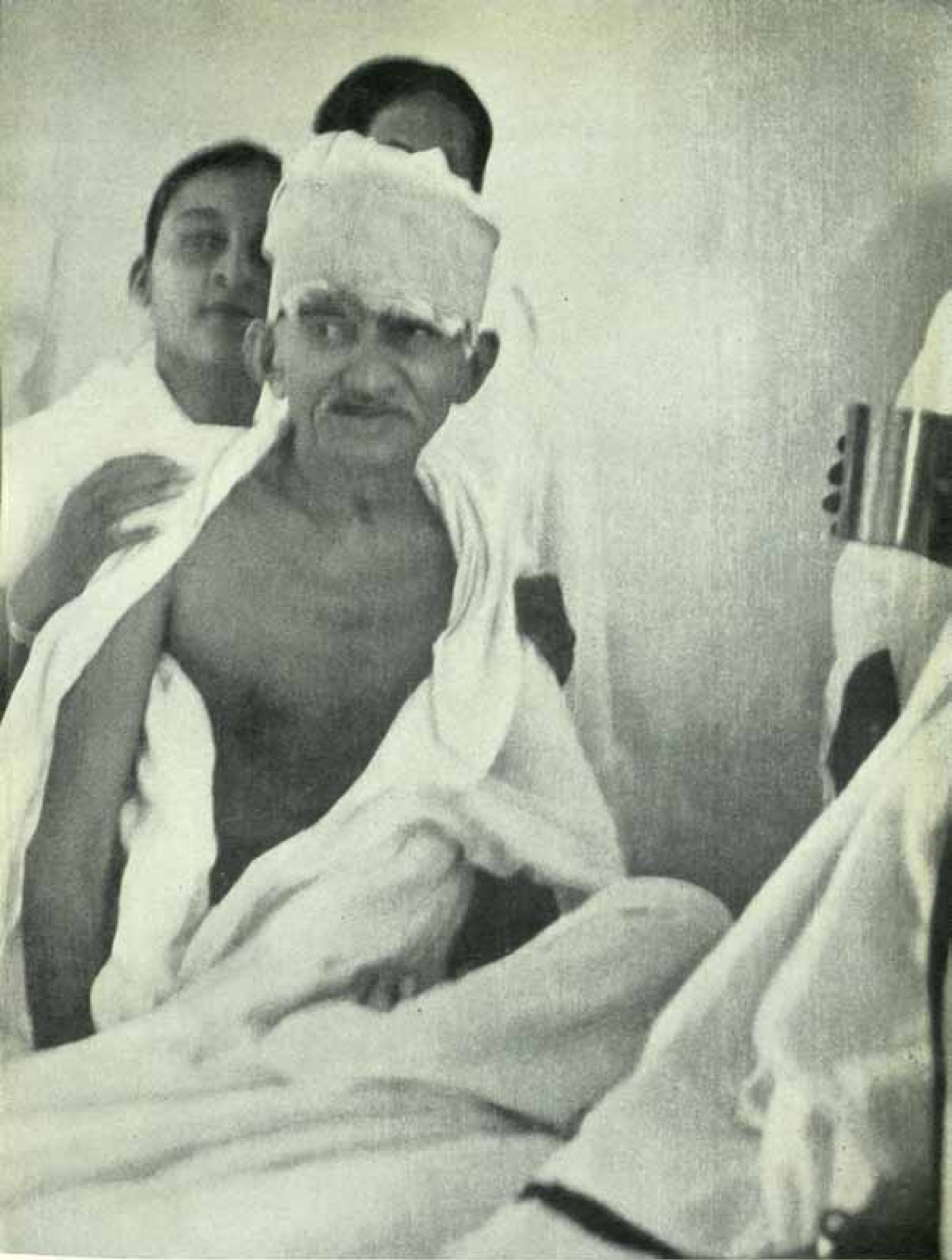
Courtesy : N. Jasani

During the Rajkot fast, March 1939



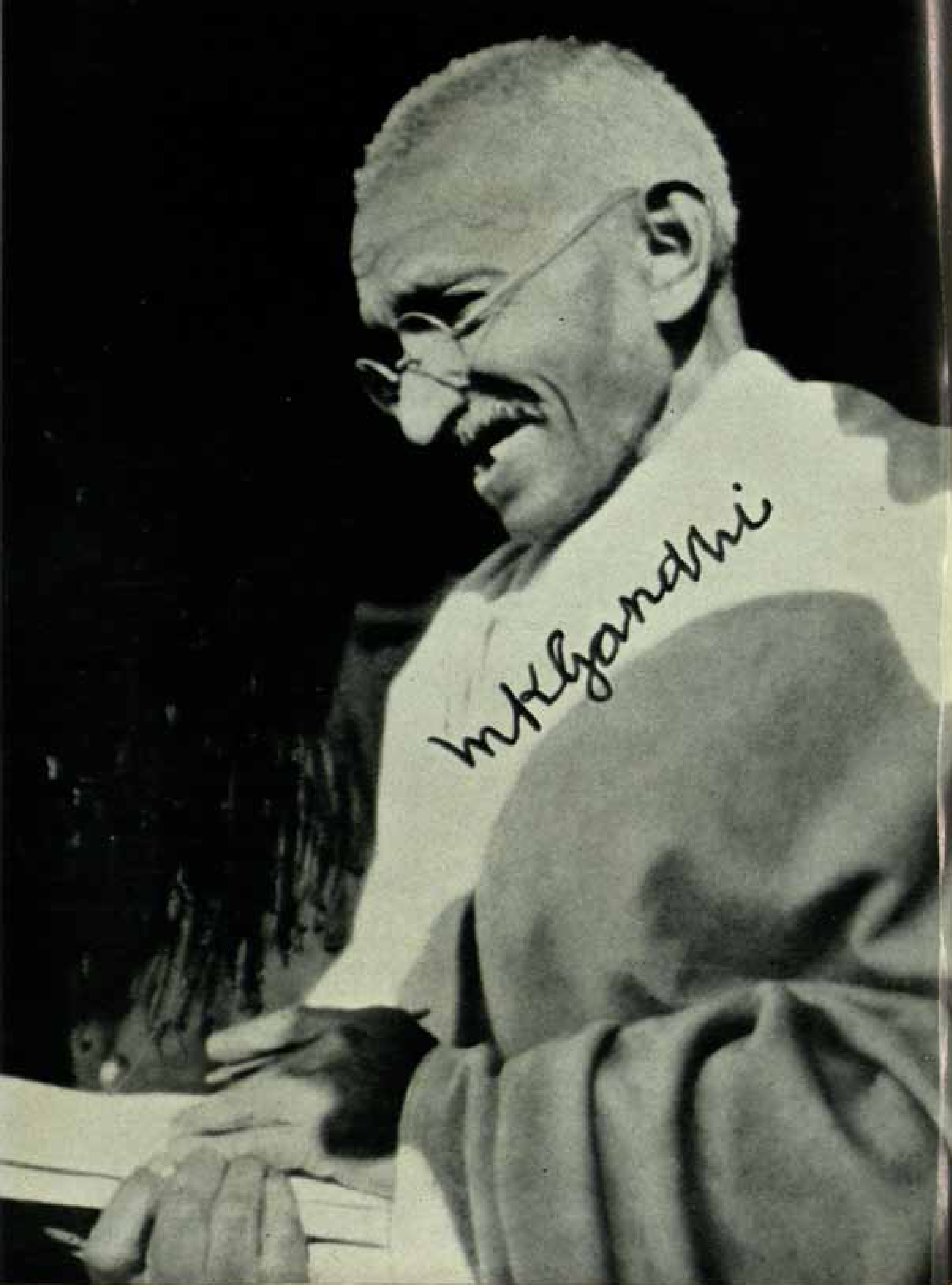
Courtesy : N. Jasani

Gandhi at rest during the fast, Rajkot, March 1939



Courtesy : N. Jasani

Gandhi breaking the fast, Rajkot, March 7, 1939



From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Gandhi, 1939

his letter to the Thakore Saheb and straight away began dictating a statement to the press:

"I release my letter to the Thakore Saheb with a heavy heart, but I have had the misfortune many a time to perform painful duties. This is one of them. I would like all my friends and sympathizers rigidly to refrain from embarking on sympathetic fasts, even for a day. I know that fasting like satyagraha is very much abused nowadays. One finds people fasting on the slightest pretext. Often there is violence behind such fasting. If for no other reason than for this practical reason of preventing thoughtless imitation, I was most reluctant to undertake this fast. But an inner urge brooks no denial. I can only, therefore, warn the people, who may wish hereafter to fast for redress of grievances, real or imaginary, against imitating me. Fasting, like some very potent medicines, can only be taken on rare occasions and under expert guidance. It is wrong, it is sinful, for everybody to consider himself an expert.

"Let the public know that at a very early age I began fasting for self-purification and then I took a prolonged fast for an erring son of mine. This was soon after followed by a still more prolonged fast for an erring daughter of a very dear friend. In both these cases, the results justified the fasts. The first public fast that I undertook was in South Africa in connection with sufferings of the indentured who had joined the satyagraha struggle in South Africa. I have no recollection of a single experiment of mine in fasting having been a fruitless effort. In addition, I had the experience of priceless peace and unending joy during all these fasts, and I have come to the conclusion that fasting, unless it is the result of God's grace, is useless starvation, if not much worse.

"The second thing, I would like to say, is that there should be no bitter speeches or writings either in connection with the Thakore Saheb or his advisers or the Resident. I have used strong language in connection with the Resident and the actions of the state officials. If I find that I have in any way wronged them, I know how to make reparations. Any harsh language used in connection with the Thakore Saheb or other actors in the tragedy will mar the effect the fast is intended to produce.

"The breach of a solemn pact does not require any harsh or bitter language in order to enhance the enormity of the evil consequences of such breaches. What the public and the press can usefully do is

by a dignified disapproval of the Thakore Saheb's action, to bring home to him the pressure of enlightened public opinion.

"All satyagraha and fasting is a species of *tyaga*. It depends for its effects upon an expression of wholesome public opinion, shorn of bitterness. Let there be no impatience, therefore, to produce the desired result because of fasting. He who has urged me to undertake the fast, will give me strength to go through it, and if it is His will that I should still live for a while on this earth to carry on the self-chosen mission of humanity, no fast, however prolonged, will dissolve the body.

"I am painfully conscious of the fact that my fast in connection with the late Mr. MacDonald's decision on the communal question induced many persons to act against their will. I hope no such thing will happen in connection with this fast. If there are public men who think that I have erred in characterizing the Thakore Saheb's notification of January 26 as a breach of promise made by the notification on December 26, they will perform a friendly act by condemning my characterization, as also the fast. It is designed undoubtedly to melt the Thakore Saheb's heart, but it is in no sense designed to coerce the public opinion into bringing pressure to bear upon the Thakore Saheb or those in whose opinion his action may be free of all blame.

"Another thing I would like to mention is the first paragraph of my letter in which I have criticized Durbar Virawala. I can truthfully say that I am slow to see the blemishes of fellow beings, being myself full of them, and, therefore, being in need of their charity. I have learnt not to judge anyone harshly and to make allowances for defects that I may detect.

"What has happened about Durbar Virawala is that I have been inundated by very bitter and serious complaints against him. In my conversations with him, I had even made mention of those complaints, and let me say to his credit that he invited me to investigate those complaints. I told him that I would do so, and but for the intervention of the fast, it was fully my desire to undertake this investigation.

"I had already invited friends to put me in the possession of evidence in support of specific allegations against him; but prolonged conversations with him for three days confirmed the impression that the complaints against him had produced upon me, so much so,

that I felt that the evidence that the conversations gave me was sufficient proof of the heavy indictment against him.

"And what I have said in the first paragraph of my letter is a deliberate understatement of my opinion. It gave me much pain to write that, but it was necessary for my mission to warn the Thakore Saheb of the overpowering influence that he exercises over His Highness. Sober and influential persons, not few but many, have repeatedly told me that so long as Durbar Virawala exercises that influence upon the Thakore Saheb, there is no peace for the people.

"I feel that there is considerable truth in this statement, and it would be wrong on my part, whilst I am embarking upon the fast, to suppress this relevant truth from the public. I have sent a private and personal letter to him, which, so far as I am concerned, shall never see the light of day. But I do make a humble appeal to him, and I would like those who know him to join me in the appeal that he should refrain from influencing the Thakore Saheb, although the latter may find it difficult to free himself from that influence. I can say much more, but I must not.

"Although, I have been in exile from Kathiawad for more than a generation and a half, I know how turbid Kathiawad politics is. This unfortunate sub-province is notorious for its intrigues. I have felt its deadly influence, even during these four days. How I wish that my fast may contribute, be it ever so little, to the purification of Kathiawad politics. I invite the princes and politicians of Kathiawad to use my fast to rid Kathiawad of the deadening influence of the poisonous atmosphere that makes healthy living in Kathiawad so difficult."

Hardly was the statement over, the ruler's reply arrived:

"My dear Mahatma Gandhi . . . You have already been assured that the notification No. 50 which I published on 26th December will stand good. The suggestions you make regarding personnel of the committee are not in accordance with the terms of that notification, and I do not feel justified in accepting them or your other suggestions. The responsibility of ensuring that the committee shall consist of suitable members, truly representative of various interests of the state, rests on me as the ruler, and it is a responsibility of which I cannot divest myself. In the best interests of my state and my people, it is impossible for me to allow anyone else to have the

final decision in a matter of such vital importance. As I have previously assured, it is my earnest hope that the committee may be able to start work in a calm atmosphere at the earliest possible moment so that there may be no delay in introducing such reforms as may be found to be necessary."

"It only adds fuel to the fire," was Gandhi's only comment, as he read and re-read the letter. He now dictated another statement to the press:

"I am sorry for this reply. I cannot help saying that the Thakore Saheb has been badly advised. The reply adds fuel to the fire. Considerations urged in the letter became irrelevant, when he gave the following note to the Sardar: 'Agreed that seven members of the committee mentioned in clause 2 of the said announcement of this date are to be recommended by Sardar Patel and they are to be nominated by us.'

"The language is unequivocal, emphatic. The Thakore Saheb, in giving that note, divested himself of the responsibility of choosing the nominees. The responsibility of nomination rests with the Thakore Saheb, but the nomination is conditioned by the fact that the names had to be recommended by the Sardar. Therefore, the responsibility for making suitable recommendations devolved upon the Sardar and that devolution took place at the will of the Rajkot ruler. It was open to the ruler and his advisers to negotiate with the Sardar, if they did not find his recommendations suitable, and to induce him to make other recommendations; but if the Sardar could not be so persuaded, the Thakore Saheb, having divested himself of the responsibility to choose a nominee, had to accept the Sardar's recommendations. Reason also suggests that if reference to the committee was to be made good, it must be a committee of the choice of those for whose sake the notification containing the reference had become necessary. Otherwise, what was given with one hand would be taken away with the other.

"If the choice is left to the ruler and his advisers, there is nothing to prevent them from appointing a committee which would make recommendations such as would completely nullify the spirit of the reference. However, the matter is past argument. If the Thakore Saheb's letter is the last word, my fast has to continue to the end of my time on this earth. I shall undergo the ordeal, I hope, with a cheerful heart, and I know also that what may not take place in

my lifetime, will take place without the shadow of a doubt after the sacrifice."

Gandhi sent the following reply to the Thakore Saheb:

"Your letter is painful. You seem to attach no value to a promise. You are acting like a man who promises a donation and then goes back upon the promise. Have you not given much by your notification of 26th December? Donations are but one of the attributes of princeship, as they are also its ornament. By that notification you promised a big donation. Its very core includes surrender of the right of making the choice of names of members of the reforms committee. But in the case in point, you surrendered that right by a letter addressed to the Sardar in his capacity as representative of the *parishad.* Your letter of today cancels that surrender. This action of yours does not befit you. I believe that compliance with my suggestion, contained in my yesterday's letter, is necessary for the fulfilment of your promise. May God move you to such compliance. It behoves you to give effect to the suggestion I have sent you through the Khan Saheb. Inasmuch as, civil disobedience now remains definitely suspended, it seems to me to be your obvious duty to discharge the civil disobedience prisoners."

On March 4, the Prime Ministers of the United Provinces, Bihar, Orissa, the Central Provinces and Sind sent urgent telegrams to the Viceroy requesting him to intervene to prevent the crisis. On the third day of Gandhi's fast, provincial ministries of Bombay, Bihar, the Central Provinces and some others threatened to resign, if action was not taken to prevent continuation of the fast by Gandhi. His weakness increased and, on March 5, Kasturbai was brought to the house to see him. Gandhi asked if the other women who had been interned were also free, and on learning that they were not, he sent his wife back to jail. His condition had deteriorated in the previous twenty-four hours and the night of March 6 was a long ordeal of nausea and retching.

The Viceroy, Lord Linlithgow, on March 6 hastened to Delhi, having curtailed his Rajputana tour and in reply to Gandhi's message, conveyed through the Resident of Rajkot, offered services of the Chief Justice of India, Sir Maurice Gwyer, to arbitrate. The Viceroy wrote:

"It is clear from what you tell me that what counts with you essentially in this matter is your feeling that there has been a breach

of faith. I realize that doubts may be entertained as to the meaning which should be attached to the Thakore Saheb's notification as amplified by his subsequent letter to Sardar Patel, and it seems to me that the best way in which these doubts can be resolved is to refer their interpretation to the highest judicial authority in the land, that is, the Chief Justice of India. I would, therefore, propose, with the consent of the Thakore Saheb, which, I understand, is forthcoming, to consult this high authority, as to the manner in which the committee should be composed in accordance with the terms of the notification and the Thakore Saheb's letter referred to above. After this the committee would be set up accordingly and it would further be provided that should any difference arise between the members of the committee as to the meaning of any part of the notification on which they were to make recommendations, this question would also be referred to the same high authority whose decision would be final.

"I fully believe that this, combined with the Thakore Saheb's assurance that he will carry out the promises contained in his notification, and with my assurance that I will exert my influence to see that he does so, will be sufficient to allay any apprehensions which have assailed you and that you will join with me in feeling that every precaution has been taken to ensure fair dealing and that you will allay the anxiety of your friends by abandoning any further strain upon your health. As I have already told you, I shall be very glad to see you here and discuss matters with you, so that any misapprehensions may be removed."

Gandhi's reply to the Viceroy, despatched on March 7, was as follows:

"I am grateful to you for your prompt reply which was delivered to me at 10.45 a.m. today. Although, naturally, it leaves several things unsaid, I regard your kind message as sufficient warrant for breaking the fast and ending the anxiety of millions who are following the fast with their prayers and such efforts as they can make to hasten a settlement.

"It is only proper for me to say that those things which are not mentioned in your message are not waived by me, but that I should expect satisfaction on them. They can, however, await mutual discussion. As soon as the doctors permit me to undertake a journey to Delhi, I shall do so."

Gandhi broke his fast on March 7 and issued the following statement to the press:

"In my opinion, this good ending is an answer to the prayers of millions. I claim to know my millions. All the twenty-four hours of the day I am with them. They are my first care and last, because I recognize no God except the God that is to be found in the hearts of the dumb millions. They do not recognize His presence; I do. And I worship the God that is Truth or Truth which is God through the service of these millions.

"But I also know I had the prayers and sympathy of others all the world over. There was a persistent effort of the intelligentsia in order to bring about an honourable understanding and speedy end of this fast. Englishmen have co-operated as well as the Indians. Politically speaking, it is His Excellency the Viceroy who is responsible for the settlement.

"I know that Englishmen do not understand the method of fast, especially, on what would appear to be a purely political issue. They often feel disgusted with such method. I know also there are Indians who do not appreciate the method of fast. I hope, when I am strong to write about 'the fast method', because over fifty years' experience has convinced me that in the plan of satyagraha it has a definite place.

"The reason why I bring the fast here is that I want to give full valuation to the Viceregal gesture, and he represents the English mind. It was open to him—and I would have justified his action—if he had said: 'I don't understand this man's actions. There seems to be no end to his fasts. There must be a stop somewhere. He will give no guarantee that this is his last fast. We propose even this time not to parley with him, until he has broken his fast.'

"I know that, ethically speaking, he would have been wrong if he had taken up that attitude, but politically speaking and examining the position from the English standpoint, I would have justified his action, if he had been unbending. I am hoping that such a good ending and appreciation even of a method which the English mind cannot understand, will produce not merely the righting of what I have held to be a primary wrong, but it will clear the atmosphere and help also in the general solution of the states' problem.

"I don't mean to say that all states will have to follow the Rajkot precedent. Rajkot is a speciality and must be regarded as an isolated

case. There are states whose problems must be considered on their merits. But public attention is riveted on the problem of the states. I hope it will be recognized that it is a problem which does not brook delay.

"I would like the princes to believe me when I assure them that I came to Rajkot as their friend and as a cent per cent peacemaker. I saw that civil resisters in Rajkot were, and could not but be unyielding. Their honour was at stake. I had tales of atrocities poured into my ears. I felt that the basest human passions would be let loose, if I allowed civil resistance to go on from day to day. That would have resulted in a bitter feud, not merely between Rajkot and civil resisters, but—as the human mind works and even jumps from the particular to the general—there would have been a bitter feud between the princes and the people.

"I know that, even as it is, there is a growing school of public opinion in India which is convinced that the princes are beyond reform, and that there would be no free India unless this 'the relic of a barbaric past' is done away with. I honestly differ with them and, as a believer in non-violence and, therefore, in the goodness of human nature, I could not do otherwise. They have a place in India. It is not possible to wipe out the traditions of a hoary past. I, therefore, hold that if the princes will read from lessons of the past and will respond to the time spirit, all will be well. But it will not do to tinker with the problem. They will have to take heroic measures. They need not follow the Rajkot model, but they will have to part with real and substantial powers in favour of the people.

"There is, so far as I am aware, no *via media* of saving the situation and saving India from a terrible blood feud. I dare not publish the letters that I have received about the princes, but of this I shall have to speak more later. In my present state of health, it is an effort to give this statement. And yet, whilst the effect of the fast is on me and whilst I am full of what I call spiritual exaltation, I must give out the best of my thoughts just now.

"Then there are the Bhayats and the Girasias. They pleaded with me their case. I told them that they had my sympathy. They could count upon me as their friend. I want them also to live as Girasias and Bhayats, but they will also have to march with the times. They will have to remodel their lives. They will have to feel one with the people over whom they exercise a kind of sway.

"Our Muslim friends came to me, and I had no hesitation in telling them without any argument that their special interests would be safeguarded, that if they wanted separate electorates in Rajkot with the reservation of seats, I would see to it that they got them. Without their asking, they would have had ample guarantees for the fullest protection of their religious freedom. I told them that if they insisted upon their nominations, I would not resist them. It is necessary for me to say this in order to ease their minds and to ease the minds of the Muslims throughout India. I want them to feel that neither I nor the Congress can ever be guilty of diminishing an iota of the safeguards that they may need, for their full growth and for the protection of their faith and culture.

"I must explain why I have released for publication only the Viceregal telegraphic message received today at 10.45 a.m. and my reply. There is an allusion to previous messages in these two communications. With the full consent of the Viceroy, I am refraining from publishing these communications. His Excellency has not prevented me from publishing them. I know that he does not believe in sending secret communications to public men, but, for reasons which I need not go into, I felt the force of the argument that for the sake of the cause it is not wise to publish them. I hope that it will never be necessary to publish them. There are in my communications allusions which were relevant, but they are not for the public. Hence the responsibility for withholding previous communications is solely mine.

"One word about the Congress. My heart is there, but I see that I will not be able to reach there. I am still too weak, but, what is more, if I am to give the finishing touch to the Rajkot matter and what it implies, I must not divide my attention between Tripuri and Rajkot. I must concentrate my attention solely on Rajkot at present. I have work to do here. I must hasten to Delhi as soon as I am able. I only hope that all will go well in Tripuri.

"It is a strange experience for me to miss the Congress session through all these years. But it is a good thing. Why should I be so proud as to think that nothing serious can be done without me? There are leaders in Tripuri who are every whit as courageous, as self-sacrificing and as devoted, as I am. I have no doubt, therefore, that though another policy may be evolved, there will be no violence in their thoughts, in their words, and in their deeds.

"The last thing I would like to say is that I want to thank the press correspondents who have been with me during these anxious days. I have felt proud of them. They have carried out the best traditions of good journalism. They have not been newsmongers, but they have been fellow messengers of peace with me. They have shown me the greatest consideration. They have never pestered me. I should like also publicly to thank my medical friends who have so ungrudgingly attended upon me.

"I hope that the prayers of those who believe in them will still continue. In a way, my work begins from now. I begin to lead an earthly life. I have to carry on delicate negotiations. I don't want to lose the goodwill with which I am surcharged at the present moment. I think of the Thakore Saheb, I think of Durbar Virawala. I have criticized them, but only as a friend. I repeat that I am in the place of a father to the Thakore Saheb. I have done no more towards him than I could have done to my truant son. I would like them to understand the significance of what has gone on in front of them, and it would be a noble ending to this fast if I discover that they have appreciated all that I have said as from a friend, and that there will be the response from them I expect.

"Rajkot is the hub of Kathiawad. If Rajkot is given a popular government, other states in Kathiawad will of their own accord and without any further civil resistance fall in line. There is no such thing as perfect coincidences on this earth. Its beauty lies in its multitudinous variety. There will be, therefore, variety of constitutions in Kathiawad states. But let the trunk be true."

On March 8, Gandhi wrote an editorial on "Its Meaning":

"A critic may say: 'What have you gained to warrant the breaking of your fast? Not one of the terms of your ultimatum to the Thakore Saheb has been fulfilled, except the release of prisoners. But you never took the fast for their release.'

"On the surface, this argument is perfect. It is consistent with a vengeance. My answer is, 'The letter killeth; the spirit giveth life.' The life-giving fact is that Rajkot has become an all-India issue and the place of the Thakore Saheb has been taken up by the Viceroy whose word I have no reason to doubt. Even if the Thakore Saheb had granted all my terms, I should not have been sure of due fulfilment, though I would have been obliged to accept them. What I have deliberately put in doubt is the meaning of the famous letter

given to the Sardar. In my ultimatum I had acted on the assumption that it bore only one meaning. But as a satyagrahi, I must always allow my cards to be examined and re-examined at all times and make reparation, if an error is discovered. Hence my reading of the settlement is that God has given me much more than I had ever expected. Time will show whether my claim is justified."

On March 13, Gandhi wrote an editorial on "Fasting":

"Fasting is an institution as old as Adam. It has been resorted to for self-purification or for some ends, noble as well as ignoble. Buddha, Jesus and Mahomed fasted so as to see God face to face. Ramachandra fasted for the sea to give way for his army of monkeys. Parvati fasted to secure Mahadev himself as her Lord and Master. In my fasts, I have but followed these great examples no doubt for ends, much less noble than theirs.

"I do not propose to discuss the merits of my recent fast beyond answering a suggestion whether I left Segaon with the knowledge that I was going to fast. I have become a coward of late for fasting. My fast in August 1933, though shortlived, was a torture to me. I had prepared for death the very day I was discharged. I had made over many of my medical stores to the nurse in charge. Since then I have dreaded fasts. The twenty-four-hour fasts of 6th and 13th April have shown me since then that my system is ill able to undergo any protracted fasting. Therefore, when I left Segaon there could be no question of my light-heartedly thinking ahead of any fast in Rajkot. Had I made any such resolution, I was bound by a promise to friends that I should give them due notice. Thus there could be no premeditation. It came upon me all of a sudden and out of the intense agony of the soul. The days preceding the fast were days of deepest prayer. The experience of the night before the determination to take the fast had choked me. I did not know what to do. The morning following told me what I was to do, cost what it might. I simply could not have taken the resolution but for the belief that God wanted me to take it."

Faith in Gandhi

1939

On the eve of the Tripuri Congress, on March 6, 1939, Gandhi dictated the following message to the press:

"I have made every effort that is humanly possible to go to Tripuri. But God willed it otherwise. All whose duty it is to go, should unhesitatingly attend the session and with combined effort cut their way through the difficulties which will confront them.

"I have implored Subhas Babu not to defy medical advice, but humbly submit to it and regulate the proceedings from Calcutta.

"In my opinion, the one and only task before the Congress is to make supreme efforts to clean the Congress house of proved corruption and impurities. The strongest resolutions that the Congress may pass will be of no value, if there should be no incorruptible organization to enforce them. I shall pray whilst I lie on my back that Congressmen will jealously guard the reputation which has been built up by painful efforts during the past fifty-two years.

"The All-India Spinners' Association and the All-India Village Industries Association which are appendages to the Congress stand apart and are untouched by internal politics. The Congress may even be affected by corruption that has crept into the organization. I hope that, as usual, it will be attended by tens of thousands of people. Tamil Nad, Bihar and Hissar have proved beyond any doubt that khadi not only revives villages and village craft but is also the finest form of famine insurance. The phenomenal increase made by the All-India Spinners' Association in the wages of spinners had given a new hope to millions of women in the villages. They flock to the All-India Spinners' Association depot for work, but there is surplus stock of khadi. Will not Congressmen and others denude the khadi and enable the A.-I.S.A. to take all the women who are eager to do spinning under the new wages scheme, which has succeeded beyond all expectations? Here also let us be true to

ourselves and to the dumb millions whom the two associations are designed to serve. The wages scheme cannot work, if unscrupulous men sell khadi or village articles are produced at starvation wages. The only security lies in the public refusing to buy khadi and village articles, except from duly certified stores.

"My fast must not unhinge the minds of Congressmen at Tripuri, but if we are to work out our own salvation by truthful and non-violent means, it is essential to attend to the smallest detail. Whilst I prize the unbounded affection of the people, let them realize that my life is not worth keeping, if anxiety to save it deflects the attention of the nation from the main purpose."

In his absence, the Khadi Exhibition at Tripuri was opened by Jawaharlal Nehru on March 6. "As I stand before you", he began, "I realize how your eyes must be thirsting to behold another figure, your ears to hear another voice that is far away. This exhibition is an incarnation of Gandhiji's dream and it is he who should, in the fitness of things, have performed its opening ceremony."

Nehru added: "Some people think that the revival of khadi and other village industries would put back the clock of our country's progress and that India's salvation can only come through a process of large-scale industrialization. I call myself a socialist and as such I do believe that large-scale industries have a place in this country. Anything that increases the material well-being of the country is bound to have its repercussion on the people. But we shall never be able to move the India of the rural masses through mere multiplication of big factories. It can only be reached through khadi and village industries. By all means, let us have big factories for production of things that cannot be manufactured in villages. Let the big manufacturer and the small artisan function, each in his own place and within his respective legitimate sphere. There is no inherent conflict between the two and there need be none. Those who call khadi worthless prove their own worthlessness. They will never really understand our country's problems."

On March 7, Subhas Chandra Bose presided over the All-India Congress Committee meeting at Tripuri. He lay on an invalid's chair and was attended by doctors all the while. The main interest centred round the resolution sponsored by Govind Ballabh Pant, expressing confidence in the old Working Committee and urging the president to nominate the new committee according to Gandhi's

wishes. President Bose expressed the opinion that there was nothing in the constitution or past practice which allowed him to place such a resolution before the A.-I.C.C. He, however, invited opinion on the subject before giving final ruling. The discussion that followed revealed divergence of opinion. Pandit Pant and others expressed the view that important resolution, such as the one given notice of by a majority of the A.-I.C.C. members, should not be ruled out of order for some technical objection. But, on the other hand, Sarat Bose, Nariman, Aney and others thought otherwise. Bose ruled that the resolution could not be discussed by the A.-I.C.C. He, however, expressed readiness to have it discussed by the Subjects Committee.

Two hundred thousand persons attended the annual session of the Congress which opened on March 10, in the vast amphitheatre at Tripuri. It was announced that, owing to illness, President Bose was unable to attend the opening session and Maulana Azad would take the chair. Azad said that the president's condition before he left Calcutta was not such as could have enabled him to undertake the journey, but he came to Tripuri against doctor's advice. They had all hoped that his condition would improve sufficiently to enable him to attend the session, but it was not the case.

In his absence, the presidential address was read by Sarat Bose. It was short but, besides stressing the volunteer organization and the stiffening of the resolution on anti-federation, Bose gave in his address an ultimatum to the British to the effect, "We shall put our demand before the British Government; if it is not conceded within six months, we shall start mass civil disobedience." Bose stood for revision of the Congress attitude towards the states as defined by the Haripura Congress resolution. Since then much had happened, he declared: "Today we find that the paramount power is in league with state authorities in most places. In such circumstances, should we of the Congress not draw closer to the people of the states?"

On the second day of the session, Aney said that, in view of the president's health, consideration of the resolution on the clarification of the misunderstanding that had arisen out of presidential election, should be referred to the A.-I.C.C. for disposal at future date. This proposal was passed by a clear majority. This was signal for uproarious scenes. Nehru stepped in and tried to speak, but he

was repeatedly interrupted. "If you read the articles which Gandhiji has written during the last month," he said, "you will see a certain agony in them. You may agree or disagree with what Gandhiji had written, but Gandhiji writes from his heart. Why is it so? Because he is today fully conscious of the coming struggle. He wants the Congress and the country to be ready for it. When he sees that we indulge in tall talks and that indiscipline spreads and his own instrument is getting rusty, he feels for it. He talks about corruption and indiscipline, because the time is very near, when I and you will be put to the test. Therefore, it is time to be united and disciplined. It is a grievous sight, a painful sight, to see some of our comrades shouting and coming out of their enclosures. The very same people have to march with us, shoulder to shoulder, and have to prepare for the struggle. During the last twenty-six years, I have attended the Indian National Congress year after year; I have never seen such a scene, though I have seen many strange things."

Aney withdrew the resolution to help the situation to ease. After it, the resolution on national demand was moved by Jayaprakash Narayan and passed in the teeth of opposition from some Bengal delegates who wanted to add an ultimatum to it. The resolution ran as follows:

"The Congress has, for more than half a century, striven for the advancement of the people of India and has represented the urge of the Indian people towards freedom and self-expression. During the past twenty years, it has engaged itself, on behalf of the masses of India, in a struggle against British imperialism and, through the suffering, discipline and sacrifice of the people, it has carried the nation a long way to independence, that is, its objective.

"With the growing strength of the people it has adapted itself to the changing and developing situation; and, while pursuing various programmes, it has ever worked for the independence of India and establishment of a democratic state in the country. Rejecting the Government of India Act and with a full determination to end it, it has decided to take full advantage of the measure of provincial autonomy that this act provided, restricted and circumscribed as it was, in order to strengthen the national movement and to give such relief to the masses as was possible under the circumstances. To the federal part of the act the Congress has declared its uncompromising opposition and its determination to resist its imposition.

"The Congress declares afresh its solemn resolve to achieve independence for the nation and to have a constitution framed for a free India through a constituent assembly elected by the people and without interference by a foreign authority. No other constitution or attempted solutions of the problem can be accepted by the Indian people. The Congress is of the opinion that, in view of the situation in India, the organized strength of the national movement, the remarkable growth of the consciousness of the masses and the new awakening among the people of Indian states, as well as the rapid development of the world situation, the time has come for the full application of the principle of self-determination to India, so that the people of India might establish an independent democratic state by means of a constituent assembly. Not only the inherent right and the dignity of the people demand this full freedom, but also the economic and other problems which press insistently on the masses cannot find a solution, nor can India get rid of her poverty and keep pace with modern progress, unless the people have full opportunities of self-development and growth, which independence alone can give. The provincial autonomy affords no such scope for development, and its capacity for good is being rapidly exhausted; the proposed federation strangles India still further and will not be accepted. The Congress, therefore, is of opinion that the whole of the Government of India Act must give place to the constitution of a free India made by the people themselves. An independent and democratic India will face the solution of our problems effectively, and will line herself with the rapidly progressive peoples of the world, and thus aid the cause of democracy and freedom.

"With a view to the speedy realization of the Congress objective and in order to face effectively the national and international crises that loom ahead, this Congress calls upon all parts of the Congress organizations, as well as the Congress provincial governments and the people generally, to prepare themselves to this end, to promote unity, and, in particular, to strengthen, purify and discipline the organization, removing weaknesses and corrupting influences, so as to make it an effective organ of the people's will."

The last day of the session was full of excitement. Pandit Pant, the Premier of U. P., moved his resolution on faith in Gandhi: "The Congress declares its firm adherence to the fundamental policies of the Congress which have governed its programme in the past

twenty years under the guidance of Mahatma Gandhi and is definitely of the opinion that there should be no break in these policies, and that should continue to govern the Congress programme in the future. The Congress expresses its confidence in the work of the Working Committee during last year, and regrets that any aspersions should have been cast against any of its members. In view of the critical situation that may develop during the coming year and in view of the fact that Mahatma Gandhi alone can lead the Congress and the country to victory during such a crisis, the Congress regards it as imperative that the executive authority of the Congress should command his implicit confidence and requests the president to nominate the Working Committee for the ensuing year in accordance with the wishes of Gandhiji."

Rajagopalachari, the Premier of Madras, who seconded the resolution, said: "Some one had suggested that Gandhiji would not approve of this resolution. I agree that he does not want this resolution. But we want to reiterate his policy and programme. It is we who want, and do actually stand for, the principles and policy for which he stands. We accept his leadership. It is only then we who can really interpret this resolution."

A battle royal had been fought over this resolution in the Subjects Committee and, it was carried by a bare majority. It was, however, passed by an overwhelming majority in the open session of the Congress. The next resolution passed was on foreign policy:

"The Congress records its entire disapproval of the British foreign policy culminating in the Munich Pact, the Anglo-Italian agreement and the recognition of rebel Spain. This policy has been one of deliberate betrayal of democracy, repeated breach of pledges, the ending of the system of collective security, and co-operation with Governments which are avowed enemies of democracy and freedom. As the result of this policy, the world is being reduced to a state of international anarchy, where brutal violence triumphs and flourishes unchecked and decides the fate of nations, and in the name of peace stupendous preparations are being made for the most terrible of wars. International morality has sunk so low in Central and South-Western Europe that the world has witnessed with horror the organized terrorism of the Nazi Government against the people of Jewish race and the continuous bombing from the air by rebel forces of cities and their civilian inhabitants and of helpless refugees.

"The Congress dissociates itself entirely from the British foreign policy, which has consistently aided fascist powers and helped the destruction of democratic countries. The Congress is opposed to imperialism and fascism alike, and is convinced that world peace and progress require the ending of both of these. In the opinion of the Congress, it is urgently necessary for India to direct her own foreign policy as an independent nation, thereby keeping aloof from imperialism and fascism and pursuing her path of peace and freedom."

The third resolution passed was on the Indian states:

"The Congress welcomes the awakening of the people of Indian states in many parts of the country and considers it as a hopeful prelude to a larger freedom, comprising the whole of India, for which the Congress has laboured. The Congress supports the demand for responsible government and civil liberty in the states and expresses its solidarity with these movements for freedom and self-expression, which are integral parts of the larger struggle.

"While appreciating that some rulers of states have recognized this awakening as a healthy sign of growth and are seeking to adjust themselves to it in co-operation with these people, the Congress regrets that some other rulers have sought to suppress these movements by banning peaceful and legitimate organizations and all political activity, and in some cases resorting to cruel and inhuman repression.

"The whole of India was profoundly stirred by the announcement of the indefinite fast by Gandhiji in order to remedy the breach by the Thakore Saheb of Rajkot of the settlement arrived at between him and his counsellors on the one hand, and Sardar Patel as representing the people on the other.

"The Congress expresses its gratification at the recent agreement resulting in the termination of the fast and trusts that the people of Rajkot will have their aspirations fulfilled, and further hopes that the princes of Kathiawad and other parts of India will march with the times and in co-operation with their people introduce popular government.

"The Congress is of opinion that the resolution of the Haripura session of the Congress relating to the states has answered the expectations raised by it and has justified itself by encouraging the peoples of the states to organize themselves and conduct their own movements for freedom. The Haripura policy was conceived in the

best interests of the people in order to enable them to develop self-reliance and strength. This policy was dictated by circumstances and by a recognition of the limitations inherent in circumstances, but it was never conceived as an obligation. The Congress has always possessed the right, as it is its duty, to guide the people of the states and to lead them with the influence. The great awakening that is taking place among the people of the states may lead to a relaxation or the complete removal of the restraint which the Congress imposed upon itself, thus resulting in an ever-increasing identification of the Congress with the states people.

"The Congress desires to reiterate that its objective, Complete Independence, is for the whole of India, inclusive of states, which are integral parts of India which cannot be separated and which must have the same measure of political, social and economic freedom as the rest of India."

The Tripuri session over, public interest centred round the Rajkot affair. The fast having ended, Gandhi was impatient to proceed to Delhi where the next step in the prosecution of his mission would have to be taken. But the doctors advised him against any physical exertion for the time being. He, however, continued to exert himself sitting at Rajkot.

In mid-March, Gandhi was able to leave Rajkot reaching Delhi on March 15, and had an interview with the Viceroy. In the afternoon he had a discussion with a worker from Travancore. He felt more and more convinced that the civil disobedience that had been suspended under his advice should not be revived light-heartedly. "Satyagraha does not begin and end with civil disobedience," he said. "Let us do a little more *tapashcharya* which is the essence of satyagraha. I am thinking out new plans of conducting the movement in view of the terrorist methods that some states seem to have adopted. We have to develop the technique of rendering futile the employment of hired hooligans against peaceful citizens." The news of severe repression in the states was pouring in.

On March 20, in the course of an article, "Read the Signs", wrote Gandhi:

"When I was in Rajkot, I had seen Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar's statement in condemnation of what he was pleased to term outside interference. May the princes summon whatever outside assistance they may choose, and not the people? There is no restriction on the

outside help the princes may take. The popular party has put many voluntary restrictions on such help. After all, what am I doing except to give advice as an expert in the science of satyagraha? By doing so I promote the spirit of non-violence and the cause of peace. The connection between the people of the states and of so-called British India is organic, vital and indissoluble. There is no such connection between the princes, who are and who pride themselves on being independent of one another. The common tie between them is that of subservience to the paramount power, without whose permission, implied or explicit, they cannot move a blade of grass.

"The paramount power itself growingly lives on the will of the nation, including the people of the states. If the nation realizes that it can develop invincible strength through truth and non-violence, the paramount power will be voluntarily replaced by the power of the people. It, therefore, seems to me that Sir C. P. Ramaswami and those dewans who think like him are bad advisers of their princes and ill serve them. The effort to ignore the Congress and the Congress workers and to prevent its natural influence working in the states is like that of a child who by the little palm of his right hand tries to stop an onrushing flood. This attempt to stifle the legitimate aspirations of the people of the states surely sows the seeds of bitterness on the one hand between the people of the states and their princes to whom they want to be loyal, and on the other between the princes and the Congress which wants to help them, if it is allowed to do so.

"I ask the princes and their advisers to read the signs of the times and march with them. They may succeed by frightful measures in sending for a time the freedom movement underground, but they will never be able to crush it altogether. I venture to think also that the paramount power will have to shed their nervousness and over-cautiousness. If they owe a duty to the princes, surely they owe an equal duty to their people. The days when the people could be ignored are gone.

"If the princes will not listen, let the paramount power tell them in plain terms that they may not expect the latter's assistance in suppressing their people. The paramount power, who draw ministers in many provinces from the Congress, may not sit still when the neighbouring states heap insults upon the Congress. It is an anomaly that demands quick handling."

A week later, he wrote on "Jaipur Civil Disobedience":

"The cry comes from Jaipur that some of the civil resisters are disappointed over the suspension and are not as enthusiastic to tackle constructive programme, which is chiefly the charkha and khadi, as they were for fight. If this is the general feeling, the suspension is doubly justified. For, the reluctance betrays lack of appreciation of ahimsa without which resistance becomes a species of violence. Those who lightly talk of freedom in states and hope to attain it through civil resistance evidently don't know what they are talking about. Will they not learn the lesson of the provinces? Provincial autonomy, such as it is, has been won by civil resistance, however inferior it may have been. But don't they realize that it is likely to break down, if Congress ministers cannot carry on without the aid of the police and the military, that is, without British guns. If the partial autonomy was won by non-violent means, it must be held also by such means and no other. From recent experiences, it seems clear that the country is not ready to hold power through non-violent means. Though for the past twenty years, the period of the greatest mass awakening, the people have been taught to abjure the use of arms, including brickbats and the lathi, and to rely upon non-violence, pure and simple, we know that Congress ministries have been obliged to resort to violence to suppress popular violence, real or imaginary. It is clear that the country cannot be made ready for the use of violence without training. Was our non-violence that of the weak? Hindu-Muslim tension is to me the acid test. The Congress corruption is a sure sign of violence. Swaraj within the states is not to be obtained by any non-violent trick. It will be won, if it is to be won, by non-violence of the strong, that is, by hard work, patient and mute suffering, service of the poor, hungry and the forsaken of society, and voluntary obedience to the laws of the state and society, in so far as they are not repugnant to public and private morals. Unless non-violence of the strong is really developed among us, there should be no thought of civil disobedience for swaraj, whether within the states or in British India. As an indispensable test—by no means infallible—of non-violence I adhere to habitual spinning and habitual use of khadi by the civil resister. Jaipur satyagrahis, if they desire to take part in any civil disobedience struggle that may take place in future, should understand the implications of non-violence and apply themselves

with zest to the fulfilment of the minimum conditions I have prescribed. Let them also know that what applies to them applies to all future satyagrahis that I may have to deal with.

"This, however, does not mean that the fight for swaraj stops. It only means that civil disobedience is not to be so cheap as I fear I have, indirectly, if not directly, made it. But I am never too old to learn. One is ever young in the felt presence of the God of Truth or Truth which is God. But if civil disobedience is henceforth to be a very dear commodity, I hope, God willing, to show that it will prove to be infinitely more effective and faster moving than the alloy with which we have so far contended ourselves."

On April 3 he wrote: "A clear understanding of suspension of civil disobedience in the states is necessary, if the people are to reap the full benefit of it. One result, not unexpected, seems to have been that some states have stiffened their attitude and are resorting to repression, they had not perhaps thought of before suspension. Where this happens, there is no cause for losing heart. Repression itself affords a training in satyagraha, even as an unsought war affords a training for the soldier. The satyagrahis should discover the causes of repression. They will find that repressed people are easily frightened by the slightest show of force and are unprepared for suffering and self-sacrifice. This is, therefore, the time for learning the first lessons of satyagraha. Those who know anything of this matchless force should teach their neighbours to bear repression not weakly and helplessly, but, bravely and knowingly."

During his stay in Delhi, he had prolonged talks with the Viceroy on the Rajkot affairs, and on April 3, the award was announced and it completely vindicated the interpretation put by Gandhi and Vallabhbhai Patel. "In my opinion," wrote Sir Maurice Gwyer "the true construction of each document is that the Thakore Saheb undertakes to appoint the persons whom Mr. Vallabhbhai Patel may recommend and that he does not reserve to himself any discretion to reject these, whom he does not approve. He is, no doubt entitled to criticize the recommendations and to urge reasons for reconsidering them; but unless it can be shown that any of the persons recommended are neither the subjects nor the servants of the state, Mr. Vallabhbhai is to have the last word."

Gandhi had an interview with the Viceroy on the 4th and the next day. "I have come back with a clear idea of the immensity

of the problem confronting us," he remarked on his return. "The fight in the states is going to be a stiff one. So far as Rajkot is concerned, I must go back." On April 7, a letter from the Viceroy was received, giving assurance of the paramount power that everything would be done to see the Thakore Saheb implemented his promise in full.

His work in Delhi over, Gandhi left for Rajkot and on the way on April 8, he wrote:

"Some friends have been expostulating with me for involving myself in the Rajkot affair. In giving so much attention to Rajkot to the exclusion of all else, you seem to have lost all sense of proportion. It was your obvious duty to be at Tripuri. If you had been there, things would have taken a different turn . . .

"Geographically, Rajkot is a tiny spot on the map of India, but the disturbance which I felt called upon to deal with was symptomatic of a universal malady. My endeavour in Rajkot was meant to nip the evil in the bud. I am of the opinion that the result of the endeavour has so far benefited the whole of India. I acted the part of a wise general who never disregards the slightest weakness in his defences. Kheda and Champaran are but instances in point. Whilst they lasted, they occupied the attention of the whole of India, and while the fight was going on I had to devote the whole of my time and attention to them. It is a rare occurrence to have to deal with the whole front at the same time. We must distinguish between the preparations for war and the actual outbreak of a skirmish, be it ever so insignificant in itself. Tripuri was a preparation, Rajkot was a skirmish."

Priceless Laboratory

1939

ON APRIL 9, 1939, Gandhi returned to Rajkot and wrote to the Thakore Saheb the following letter:

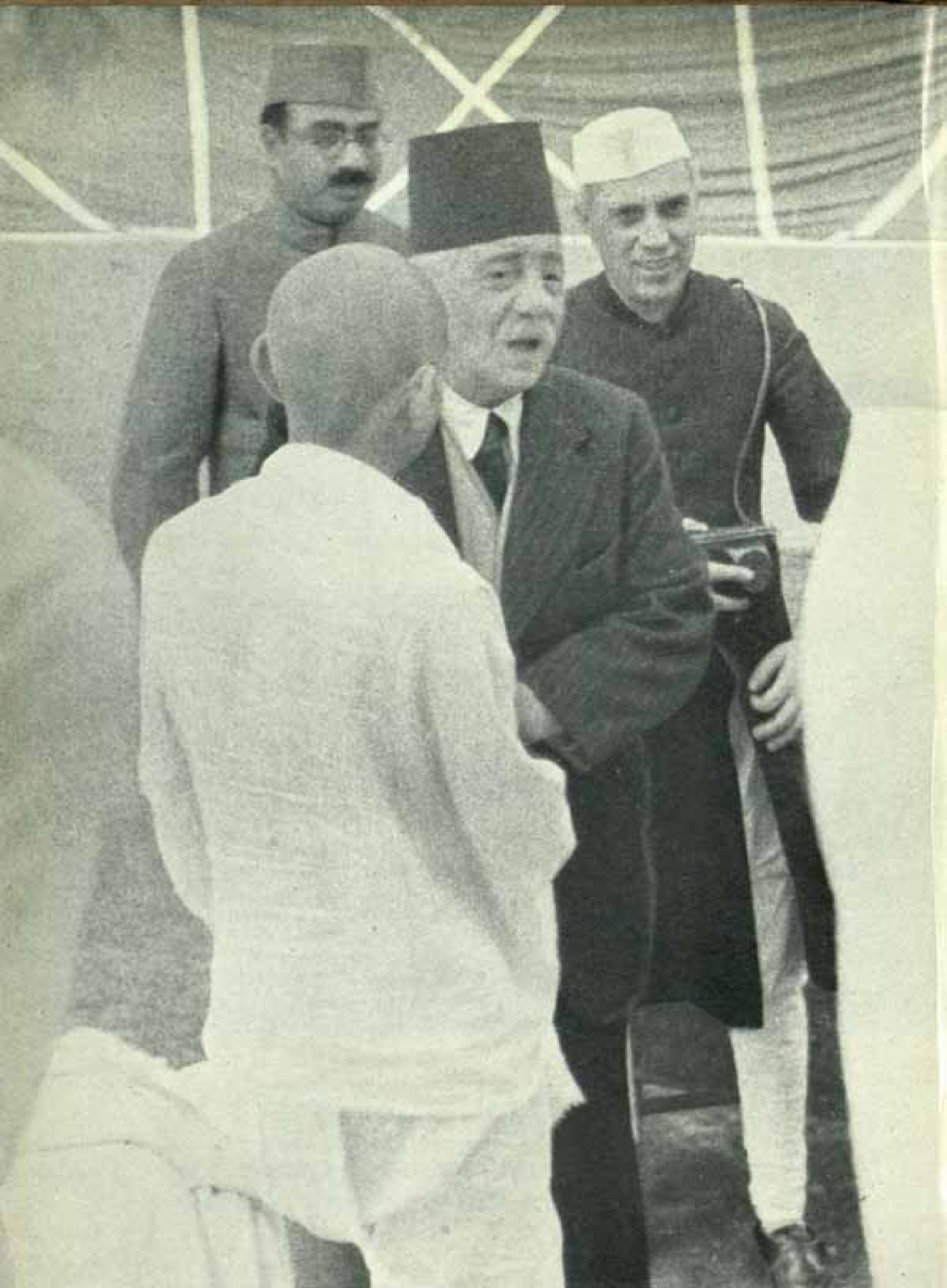
"It is necessary now for you to appoint the committee in terms of Sir Maurice's award. It seems to me that you will desire to include the four names you have notified. So long as the Sardar's nominees have a bare majority on the committee, he will gladly accept those names. Thus, if the four names remain and the three officials are to have the right to vote, the Sardar will have to nominate eight members. If you withdraw the four names, the Sardar will have to give seven names. Will you kindly let me have your opinion? Will you please also let me know who the three officials will be and of them who will be president of the committee?"

In reply, the Thakore Saheb wrote: "You are right in supposing that I should wish for the inclusion in the committee of the four gentlemen who were appointed by me to represent the Muslim community, the Bhayats and the Depressed Classes. And I consider it to be of the utmost importance that these communities should be effectively represented and that these particular representatives were selected after the most careful consideration. At the same time, the expedient suggested by you, namely, the enlargement of the committee merely to give Mr. Patel's nominees a majority, is now hardly practicable. What now has to be done is to take action in fulfilment of the terms of my previous notification No. 50, dated 26 December 1938, in the light of the award of the Chief Justice of India who has observed that the notification restricts the members of the committee to ten. As stated above, it is certainly essential that the important Muslim and Bhayat communities should, like all other communities, have proper representation. It was with this object in view that I included in the list published in my notification No. 61, dated 21 January 1939, the names of two suitable



Photograph : D. E. Pathay

Starting for an interview with the Viceroy, Delhi, March 15, 1939



Courtesy : N. Jasani

Gandhi with the leader of the Wafd delegation, which arrived from Egypt to attend the Tripuri session of the Congress, Delhi, March 1939

Courtesy : N. Jasani

With the Egyptian delegates, Delhi, March 1939

Courtesy : N. Jasani

Discussion with the Working Committee members, Delhi, March 1939

Gandhi and Nehru, Delhi, March 1939

Dear Mahatma At the last Congress Session some rude hands have deeply hurt Bengal with an ungracious persistence, please apply immediately balm to the wound with your own kind hands + prevent it from festering.

Courtesy: Visva-Bharati

Tagore's note to Gandhi, March 29, 1939

New Delhi
2-4-39

Dear Gurudev,

I have your letter full of tenderness. The problem you set before me is difficult. I have made certain suggestions to Subhas. I see no other way out of the impasse.

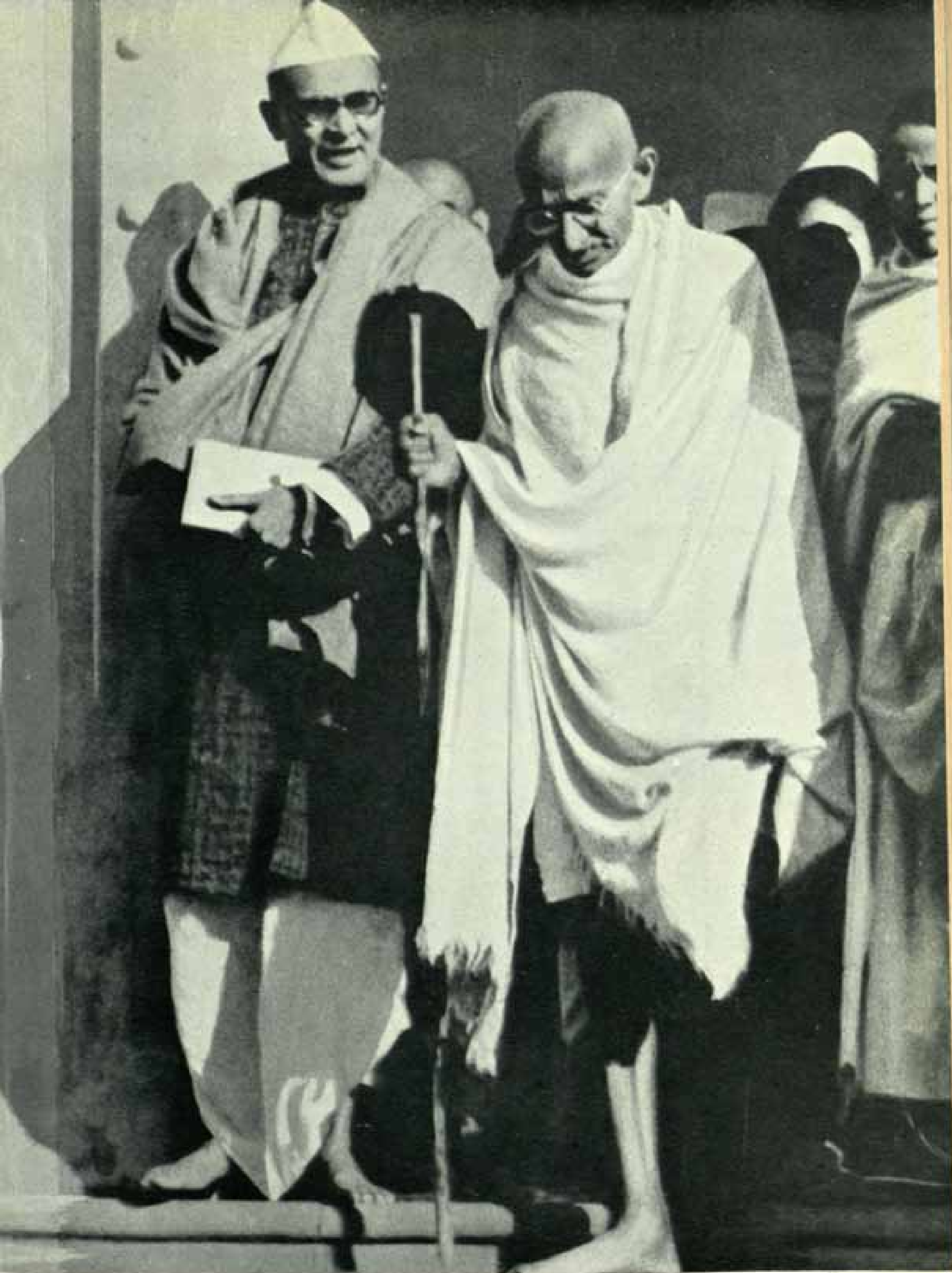
I do hope you are keeping your strength.

Charlie is still in the hospital.

With love
yours
M. K. Gandhi

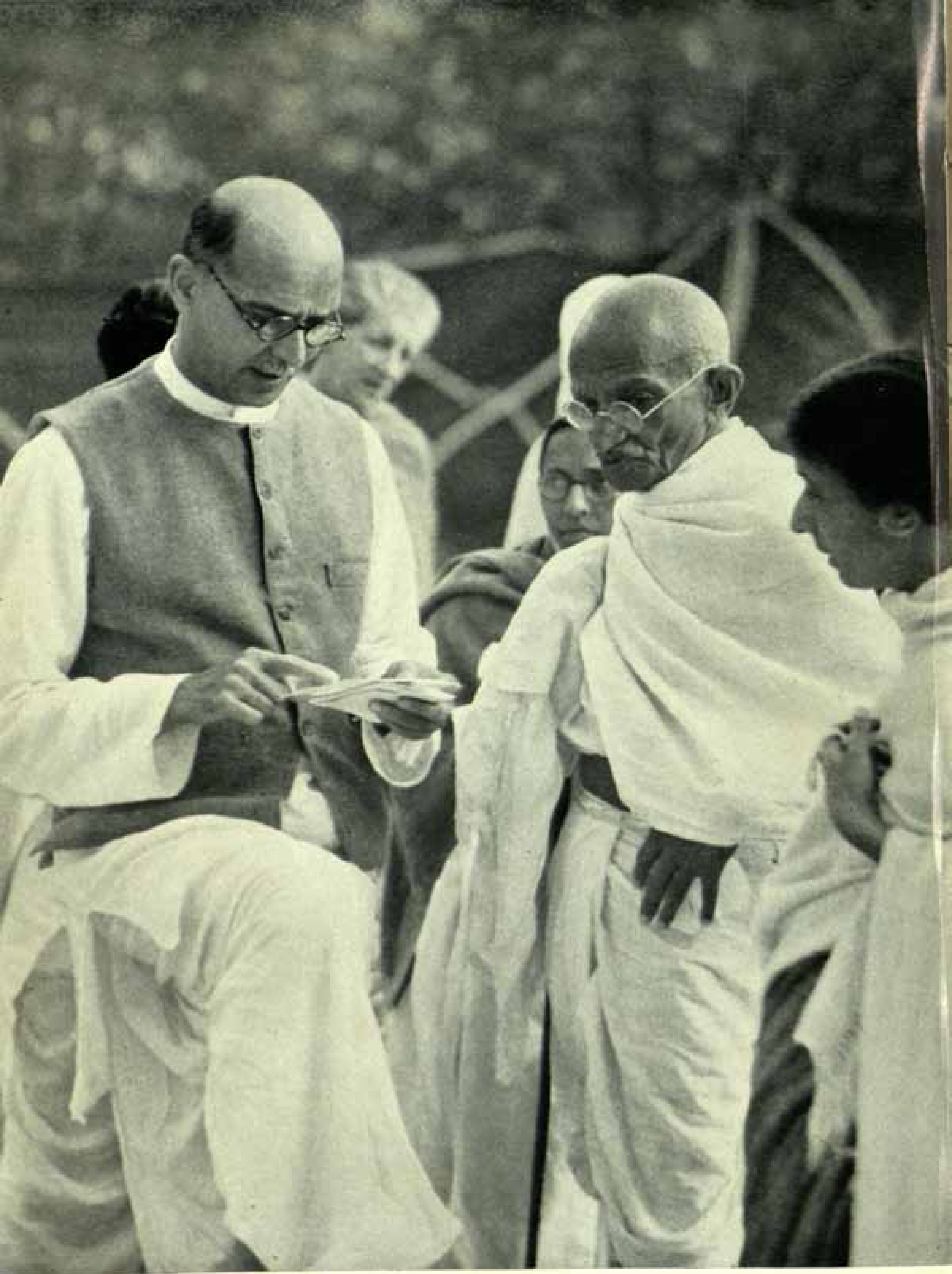
Courtesy : Visva-Bharati

Gandhi's letter to Tagore, dated New Delhi, April 4, 1939



From Sumati Morarjee Collection

On the way to the Viceregal Lodge, Delhi, April 4, 1939



Photograph : Kanu Gandhi

Mahadev Desai reading the Viceroy's letter to Gandhi, April 7, 1939

representatives of the Muslim community and one of the Bhayats. That you shared this view is clearly evident from the assurances which you gave to the deputations of Muslims and Bhayats which came to see you on February 28th, and the letter you wrote to the president of the Girasia Association on March 11. These assurances were, as you will remember, to the effect that the representatives already nominated on their behalf would certainly be included in the committee. In view of these assurances, I have no doubt that you will advise Mr. Patel to include these names in the list of seven non-official members who, in accordance with the Chief Justice of India's decision, are now to be recommended by him.

"I earnestly hope that the name of Mr. Mohan Mandan will be included in his list, as this gentleman, besides being a representative of the Depressed Classes, has for seven years been the elected chairman of the Rajkot Municipal Corporation and is obviously a person who should be on the committee.

"I am sure you will agree that the matter of primary importance is not to secure a majority for any particular party, but to ensure that a really representative committee, effectively representing the various interests in the state, may now be set up consisting of persons fully qualified to undertake the very responsible duties which will devolve on them.

"I am awaiting Mr. Patel's recommendations and when I have received them, I shall appoint the three official members, who will of course have the right to vote, and decide who shall be the president of the committee."

At the end of five days' talks with the Muslim representatives, often continuing till midnight, and shorter talks with the Bhayats and having failed with them, Gandhi put his signature on April 14 to the letter to the Thakore Saheb submitting seven names of the Sardar's representatives. "It pains me to note," he wrote, "that you have shaken your responsibility off your shoulders. The Muslim and the Bhayat names, to which you refer, were nominated by you. My promise, therefore, means and could be interpreted to mean only that I on my part would help you to fulfil your promise, even if the Chief Justice's award went against you. It passes my understanding how anyone can interpret my promise to give what I had no power to give. For, I am acting only as the Sardar's and the *parishad's* trustee. It is obvious that I may not give anything outside

the terms of my trust. Therefore, my promise can only mean that if you desire to retain the names in question, I would help you on behalf of the Sardar to do so, subject to the majority of the Sardar's names remaining intact. I hold that it is impossible to put more meaning into my word. Unfortunately, you have taken an extraordinary step and thrust upon me the responsibility of accommodating in the Sardar's list the names of your nominees. What pains me is that you should misconstrue my promise in a manner that would render nugatory the right secured by the Sardar.

"Although, after your letter the only thing that remained for me was to send you seven names on behalf of the Sardar, I entreated three out of the four nominees named by you, to allow themselves to be included among the Sardar's nominees and to work as one team with the rest. But my entreaty has ended in failure. I have exhausted all effort to honour your nominations, if it were at all possible. You have mentioned a fourth name in your letter. I did not think it necessary to put Shri Mohan Mandan to the trouble of coming to me to discuss things, as he is not a Harijan.

"The exclusion of the above four names does not mean that the representatives nominated by the Sardar will not guard the special and legitimate rights of Muslims, Bhayats, Harijans or any other section. These members recognize no caste distinctions so far as the committee and service of the people are concerned. They have before them the cause of the Rajkot people as a whole. They are on the committee because the party they represent conducted fight for the rights of the Rajkot people. You appreciated their endeavour and gave the right of nominating the names of seven state subjects outside the officials, to the Sardar, or the *parishad.*

"Let me once more entreat you to listen to me. You say that you are unable to enlarge the committee. This is not right. The Chief Justice's award does not mean any absolute obligation to limit the number of the committee to ten. The two parties can make any alterations by mutual agreement. The Sardar is desirous of helping you to keep your four nominees. The only condition is that the *parishad's* majority should not be affected in the extended committee. According to the Chief Justice's award, the Sardar has a majority of four at present. Instead of that, for your sake and for the sake of avoiding bad blood, the Sardar is willing to reduce it to a majority of one. Can you expect anything more?

"In your notification dated December 26, the time-limit for the committee to complete and submit report to you was fixed at one month and four days. May I remind you that the limit may not be exceeded?

"During the second satyagraha struggle there were confiscations, fines and other repressive measures. It is hardly necessary to remind you that these should be now cancelled."

In the course of a statement dated April 15, Gandhi said:

"I sat about exploring the means of accommodating at least two Muslim representatives and one Bhayat representative among the seven. This could not be done, unless they could see their way to agree to work as one team with the Sardar's other nominees. If this condition could not be fulfilled, the very object of giving the Sardar, that is, the *parishad* the right to select all the seven members could be easily frustrated. But in spite of making all the efforts it was humanly possible both for the Sardar and me to make, we failed and, therefore, the public will find that all the four nominees of the Thakore Saheb have been omitted.

"This does not mean that the committee will not represent all interests that could have been covered by the four nominees and several other interests, not specifically represented, for, I have not known a single committee in the world which could cover specifically and sectionally all imaginable interests. The very essence of democracy is that every person represents all the varied interests which compose the nation. It is true that it does not exclude, and should not exclude, special representation of special interests, but such representation is not its test. It is a sign of its imperfection.

"I do not claim perfection for this Rajkot committee. But, any attempt on the part of the Sardar to accommodate all the special interests without the indispensable safeguard that I have suggested would have failed to produce a constitution which could be satisfactorily worked in the interests of the whole of the people of Rajkot. I venture to suggest that the Sardar's nominees have been selected after fulfilling the first indispensable condition of team work, so that they would make a conscientious effort to represent each in his own person the whole of the interests of the people of Rajkot. Therefore, it will be doubly the duty of the seven members to safeguard and protect all special and legitimate rights of the Muslims, the Bhayats and the Harijans of the Rajkot state.

"As to the Harijan representation, I may say that Shri Mohan Mandan, the fourth nominee of the Thakore Saheb, an estimable citizen of Rajkot though he is, is in no sense a Harijan any more than the seven nominees whose names have now been submitted to the Thakore Saheb on behalf of the Sardar.

"The Girasia Association has accused me in forcible language of a breach of promise in excluding their representative from the list of seven. All I can say is that they have hopelessly misread and misunderstood my letter of March 11. I do not propose at present to go into the immediate circumstance in which I hastily penned my reply to their note, but it has got to be read in conjunction with the statement, with which I left Wardha, on what I have described as a mission of peace. I then stated, as an indispensable condition of the acceptance of any permutation and combination that might be offered for the composition of the committee, that on it the Sardar's nominees should have at least a bare majority of one. The letter of March 11 has got to be read together with that condition. Nothing whatsoever happened on March 11 to make me waive that condition.

"Assuming for the moment that I forgot to incorporate the condition in my letter, the Girasia friends would be expected to read my letter with the missing condition. But I go a step further, that to read into my letter the meaning that the Girasia Association gives it, is to frustrate the very object which was sought to be secured by the Thakore Saheb's letter to the Sardar. With the meaning that the Thakore Saheb attached to it and which meaning the Chief Justice's award has upheld, I had no right to throw away that precious right. I should be guilty of a breach of trust, if I did so. It should be remembered that the fast was taken for the purpose of vindicating the Sardar's position and, therefore, if you like, to repair the breach of faith which I had imputed to the Thakore Saheb. The award has done it. Is it to be expected that, at a time when I was proceeding to Delhi in the expectation of the Sardar's contention being upheld, I was to undo in advance the effect of such a happy termination of the Delhi visit? I have more than fulfilled my promise contained in my letter of March 11 addressed to the Girasia Association by offering to reduce to one the majority of four, which the award gives to the Sardar's nominees. I think I deserved better treatment from the association. All their appeal

should have been to the Thakore Saheb to seize the opportunity given by me of rehabilitating his nominees. Instead of choosing that obvious course, they have chosen the wrong course. I have reminded Girasias that, when I returned from my self-imposed exile at the end of 1914, I gave them ample proof of my friendship and concern for them. They had first met me in Bhavnagar. Since then they have been off and on seeking my guidance and advice. Many of them know that it has been always at their disposal. But no mischief is yet done. They may rest assured that all their just rights will be respected by the Sardar's nominees."

Ever since his arrival at Rajkot, Gandhi had made it a point to hold daily congregational evening prayer on the Rashtriya Shala grounds. On the evening of April 16, he learnt that the Bhayats and Muslims were going to hold a black-flag demonstration and a garland of shoes had been got ready for him. He gave peremptory instructions that anybody approaching him, no matter with what intent, should be given absolutely free access.

He motored as usual to the prayer ground, and almost simultaneously with it, the demonstrators too, numbering about 600, arrived on the scene with the black flags and offensive placards. They lined along the fence, enclosing the prayer ground from the main road. Gandhi bowed to the demonstrators before he sat down to pray. All the while the prayer was going on, the processionists kept on shouting and yelling. The prayer over, he rose to go. The demonstrators had by now begun to pour in through the entrance of the narrow passage leading to the prayer ground. Gandhi, instead of going by car as usual, decided to walk through the rowdy crowd. At the entrance, the rush was too great to allow any further progress. The pushing and jostling by the demonstrators was growing apace. Friends tried to form a protective cordon around Gandhi, but he waved them away. "I shall sit here or go alone in their midst," he said. All of a sudden, he was seized by an attack of intense pain in the region of the waist, and he felt as if he would faint—an old symptom in his case that seized him whenever he had an acute mental strain. For a while, he stood in the midst of that jostling crowd, motionless and silent, his eyes shut, supporting himself on a staff, and tried to seek relief through silent prayer. As soon as he had sufficiently recovered, he reiterated his resolve to go through the demonstrators all alone. He then addressed a Bhayat, who stood

confronting him, "I wish to go under your sole protection, not my co-workers'." Some Bhayats had already noticed his condition. They now bade the rest to make way for him. Leaning on the shoulder of the Bhayat, he walked to the waiting car. "This is the way of satyagraha," he said, "to put your head unhesitatingly into the lap of your 'enemy', for him to keep or to make short work of just as he pleases. It is the sovereign way, and throughout my half a century of varied experience it has never once failed me."

Two Muslim representatives came to see him soon after. "You were less than fair to yourself and to us in exposing yourself to such a risk," they told him. "Anything may happen in a motley crowd." Gandhi, in reply, described to them how such risk-taking had become a part and parcel of his life. There were at least half a dozen occasions in South Africa and in India, when he had risked his life like that, and he had never regretted doing so. In all cases the assailant or the would-be assailants had ended by becoming his friends. "But should the worst happen after all," he remarked, "what privilege can be greater for a satyagrahi than to fall with a prayer in your heart for those whom you wanted to serve but who under a delusion, took you for an enemy?"

That very day, Gandhi issued the following statement:

"What has hurt me most about this evening's demonstration is that the demonstrators chose what was for me a solemn hour of the day. For years, all India knows, I have offered without practically a breach my evening prayers in open congregation. Why did they seek my prayer time to molest me, and what had the numerous men, women and children, who at the end of the day had come to offer their humble prayer to the one and only God of us all, done to deserve such interference? Why was it not enough, seeing that I do not go out except for prayers, to shout their slogans and wave black flags as I entered the prayer ground? Even that would have been bad enough. But they vigorously continued to shout their slogans throughout the prayers. And they were all my countrymen. Their cries pierced me like arrows whilst I was trying to concentrate my mind on words of the prayer. I have not attained the power of meditation, which makes one impervious to all disturbances from without. They knew that if they had invited me to attend their meeting to witness their hostile demonstration and wrath, weak as I have been, I would have gone there and tried to appease them.

"I maintain I have not committed any breach of promise. To my knowledge, throughout my public and private career, I have never broken a promise. Here, the very motive for a breach of promise is lacking. But lest I might have made a promise, however hastily, which could bear another meaning than the one I had put upon my letter to the Bhayats of March 11, I asked as many legal friends in Rajkot as I could get together, and warned them to give their unbiased opinion, and told them that their reputation would be lost, if they sought to support without full cause my own reading of my letter. I have their reasoned and unanimous opinion fully supporting my meaning to the exclusion of any other.

"I fear the demonstrators have not served their cause by their unwarranted interference with the prayer of innocent women and men. There are tremendous difficulties in the way of getting due fulfilment of the award of the Chief Justice. I am not free to go into these difficulties at the present stage. But I appeal to those who feel grieved at my conduct in excluding certain names from the Sardar's list to bear with me. They may adopt all the just means to redress their grievances. The method they adopted today was very far from being just."

The opposition stiffened. The question of representation of the Bhayats and Girasias on the reforms committee took a new turn following the correspondence between Gandhi and the president of the Girasia Association. On April 18, Jinnah, in a press statement, criticized Gandhi's attitude regarding the Muslim representation on the Rajkot Reforms Committee, and advised the Muslims to boycott the committee. The next day, Dr. Ambedkar, who had arrived in Rajkot, at the invitation of the Thakore Saheb, had an interview with Gandhi and stressed the need of including a Depressed Class representative on the reforms committee. The discussions between Gandhi and Virawala with regard to the personnel of the Rajkot Reforms Committee broke down on April 23. Gandhi got disgusted with the whole thing and, before leaving Rajkot, he addressed the *parishad* workers:

"As you know for the last fifteen days I have striven hard to find a solution to the Rajkot tangle. But I am sorry to have to confess to you that in this I have failed. I am most grieved over failure to arrive at a settlement with the Bhayats and the Muslims. But I have the conviction, and I want you to share that conviction with

me, that our labour has not been wasted. Providence has its appointed hour for everything. We cannot command results; we can only strive. And so far as I am concerned, it is enough satisfaction for me to know that I have striven my utmost to discharge the duty that rested on me.

"In making my sporting offer to Mr. Gibson yesterday, I know that I was making a big surrender. I could have demanded that the Thakore Saheb be made to implement his promise in full, and if I had insisted on it, the paramount power would have probably been forced to intervene. But I felt that such a course, though legitimate, would, under the circumstances, not be the best course for any of the parties concerned. And so I chose instead the alternative of putting one's head into the lap of the 'enemy'.

"Let me explain to you the working of my mind in making that offer. I hold it to be an axiomatic truth that true ahimsa never fails to impress itself on the opponent. If it does, to that extent, it is imperfect. All the time that I have been engaged in the Rajkot question, this question has been forcing itself upon me: 'Why has our ahimsa failed to gain recognition from the state authorities?' In South Africa, the conceding of the first demands of satyagrahis did not leave ill feeling behind it. For eight long years, General Smuts fought uncompromisingly against the claims of the Indian community. But in the end he recognized the justice of the claims. And what was possible in South Africa should be possible in Rajkot too. There we were a handful of Indians pitted against the entire Boer population. Here members are on your side. There our fight was against a government. But here you have only to gain entrance into the heart of one man. Surely there must be something seriously wrong about us and our ahimsa, if we cannot even do that. To say that there can be no peace in Rajkot so long as Durbar Virawala is there, is to speak not the language of ahimsa but of *himsa*. Your and mine ahimsa is today on its test.

"I have been holding a silent court of inquiry within myself. How is it that I came to Rajkot on a mission of peace but have ended by antagonizing Durbar Virawala and the state authorities? I had banked upon the ancestral family relationship existing between me and the Thakore Saheb, but instead, I had to seek the intervention of the paramount power. 'What a lapse from grace is this,' I said to myself. I feel crestfallen and humbled. Should I absolve the

paramount power altogether from its promise? I have been thinking furiously on these lines. But my self-confidence seems to have deserted me for the moment. However, I leave these thoughts with you for what they are worth to ponder and think over. The capacity to convert the heart of Durbar Virawala is the acid test of your ahimsa as it is of mine.

"The discovery I have made is this. No matter what concessions you succeed in getting from the state authorities, it is only to the extent they are the result of a true heart conversion on their part that you will be able to enjoy or digest them. But your ahimsa to be effective must shine through your speech, your action and your general behaviour. A votary of ahimsa must cultivate a habit of unremitting toil, sleepless vigilance, ceaseless self-control.

"Let me explain my meaning further by illustration. Yesterday I was engaged for five hours in a talk with Durbar Virawala. He was the same as before. But I had gone there with the dawn of a fresh spirit, as a result of all my heart searching upon me. My reaction to him this time was different. 'We are after all what nature has made us, and it is no use quarrelling with nature,' I said to myself, and I tried to get as much as I could to get under his skin to view the questions from his angle. I did not mince matters and even told him some home truths. But there was no irritation on my part or resentment on his. It was a different atmosphere. I told him that I was prepared to be locked up with him in a room till a settlement was reached. But for that, mutual trust was necessary which I, on my part, had lost with reference to him. I feared him and distrusted him. And, therefore, I invited him to remove my fears and to convert me.

"I have not the time to share with you all the recollections of this interview. But there was one thing in this interview that galled me and to which I wish to draw your particular attention. He had an unmixed contempt for the *parishad* people. I had noticed this before too. But now it hurt me. Why should your satyagraha excite his contempt of all things? I can understand ahimsa inspiring a kind of fear, the sort of fear that a mother feels when her child gets offended and goes to sleep hungry without taking food. But a genuine satyagraha should never excite contempt in the opponent even when it fails to command regard or respect. This is not superrefinement on my part; satyagraha is nothing, if not a ceaseless

quest after perfection. A satyagrahi, therefore, turns the searchlight inward relentlessly to weed out all the defects that may be lying hidden there still. Thereby, he increases his capacity to serve the cause he has espoused a thousand-fold.

"I have asked you always to rely upon your own inner strength instead of banking upon outside help. I now want you to go a step further. You must now cease to look for guidance from without. Satyagraha should become to you an independent inspiration. It should be intolerable for you and me both that you should depend in every little thing on my advice. You must make a firm resolve that you will now arrive at a settlement according to your own inner light and conviction, and that too with Durbar Virawala, not without him. You may drop ahimsa, if you find that it does not suit you or is likely to make cowards of you. But if you decide to follow the path of ahimsa, then you should know that it will be an empty name unless it aims at the conversion of the heart of the opponent.

"Let me offer you a few concrete suggestions in this connection. If you accept the approach that I have indicated, I would like the seven of you, whom the Sardar has nominated to go to Durbar Virawala and tell him that you have decided to relieve me of all responsibility in connection with Rajkot, that you would like likewise to relieve the paramount power too of its responsibility in this behalf and rely instead entirely on your capacity to induce him to implement the notification of December 26. Ask him to tell you what you should do to win his heart. Hold yourself in readiness to drain to the last the bitter cup of indignities and humiliations. It was only when I had learnt to reduce myself to a zero, that I was able to evolve the power of satyagraha in South Africa.

"Ahimsa must express itself through the acts of selfless service of the masses. I cannot think of a better symbol of, or medium, for its expression than the spinning wheel. Ahimsa is a science. The word 'failure' has no place in the vocabulary of science. Failure to obtain expected result is often the precursor to further discoveries. It is in that spirit that you should approach and pursue your present mission."

On April 24, on the way to Bombay, Gandhi wrote:

"Rajkot seems to have robbed me of my youth. I never knew that I was old. But now I am weighed down by the knowledge of

decrepitude. I never knew what it was to lose hope. But it seems to have been cremated in Rajkot. My ahimsa has been put to a test such as it has never been subjected to before.

"I have given fifteen precious days to have the committee contemplated in the award of the Chief Justice of India. I seem to be as far from it as ever. I have found unexpected difficulties in my path. The award was acclaimed throughout India as a complete victory for the Sardar. But it has been effectively used against me for accusing me of a breach of promise to the Muslims and the Bhayats. The promise that the Thakore Saheb had made was on my return from Delhi transferred to my poor shoulders. The plain meaning of all that I had said could only be that I should help the Thakore Saheb to carry out his promise, though, according to the award, I need not. Whatever the reason might be, the Muslims and the Bhayats relieved the Thakore Saheb of the duty of fulfilment of the promise.

"Failing to placate both the Muslims and the Bhayats, I sent the Thakore Saheb seven names of the *parishad*. In reply, I was called upon to prove that six out of the seven names were Rajkot state subjects. One could have thought that I would at least be given an inkling of the objections. If every statement made by men presumed to be fairly honourable could be challenged, it might take a year to finish an inquiry into the facts of each case. But I have sent the required proofs.

"When I seemed to have come to the end of my resources and my patience, I sent a letter of complaint to the British Resident as the local representative of the paramount power seeking his aid in terms of the Viceregal assurances given to me. He invited me to an interview. Whilst we were discussing the ways and means, an idea flashed across my mind that I should end the agony by foregoing the right of nomination of members of the committee, and so I made what I thought, and the Resident also admitted, was a sporting offer. It was that the whole committee should be selected by the Thakore Saheb to report in accordance with the terms of the notification of 26th December, provided that the committee's report should be shown to the *parishad*, and that if the *parishad* found the report did not carry out the terms of the notification, their dissenting note and the original report should be sent to the Chief Justice of India for his decision. The Resident sent my offer

to Durbar Shri Virawala, but His Highness the Thakore Saheb has turned it down.

"Agonizing experiences of the fifteen days have resulted in my making the discovery that my ahimsa should be voted down as failure, if the Thakore Saheb and Durbar Virawala were to feel that they had to give anything under pressure from above. My ahimsa demanded that I should remove that feeling. And so when the opportunity came to me, I tried to assure Durbar Virawala that I took no delight in invoking the assistance of the paramount power. Apart from ahimsa, my connection with Rajkot should impose that restraint on me. I assured him that my spontaneous offer to Mr. Gibson was an effort in that direction. Immediately he retorted: 'But if you are not satisfied with His Highness' committee's report, you claim the right to scrutinize the report in the light of the notification, and if the *parishad* dissents, you want to have the report and the dissent to be examined by the Chief Justice of India. Do you call this removing the feeling of pressure? Why not trust His Highness and his adviser through and through? You may not get all that you want, but whatever you get will be charged with his goodwill and will carry a promise of full delivery. And do you know what the *parishad* people have said about the Thakore Saheb and me? Is that the way of the people desiring reforms from their prince?' There was bitterness in his speech and contempt for the *parishad* people. But with the sudden consciousness of my imperfect handling of ahimsa, instead of parrying the blow, I recognized the force of his argument as showing want of faith in the essential goodness of human nature and the littleness of my own belief in ahimsa. And so our conversation went on and covered many proposals. But it was inconclusive. I was no nearer the solution of the tangle. Nevertheless, I parted with the feeling that we had come to know each other better, and that in trying to woo Durbar Shri Virawala, I was on the right track.

"And so I presented this new line of approach to my co-workers. They had more than once told me that Durbar Shri Virawala was the source of all evil that had descended upon Rajkot, and that his removal would mean for them full swaraj. I had no difficulty in showing them that what they were thinking of was good government, not self-government. At this meeting, which took place yesterday, I said that if they accepted my explanation of ahimsa, they

would have to set their heart not on getting rid of Durbar Shri Virawala, but on converting him. This they could do only if they would set about finding his good points and working at them. They must develop infinite faith in the capacity of ahimsa to neutralize every person of *himsa*. True ahimsa lay in running into the mouth of himsa. If cows could be credited with intelligence, it is conceivable that given a sufficient number of such cows, who would run into the tiger's mouth, the latter would lose the relish for cow flesh and would change his nature. They must, therefore, shed their fear of Durbar Shri Virawala and their disbelief in the power of ahimsa to achieve the seemingly impossible.

"They listened to this—to them—new doctrine with attention. I did not ask them whether they were convinced. I hope they were. They would quite legitimately have asked me: 'Are you yourself so convinced of the correctness of this extraordinary attitude you have commended to us as to tear the award to pieces and simply rely upon the goodness of Durbar Shri Virawala's heart?' If they had asked this question, I would have been obliged to say: 'I have not yet found the requisite courage. Ahimsa accrues only to the courageous.'

"And so I have left empty-handed, with body shattered, hope cremated. Rajkot has been to me a priceless laboratory. My patience has been sorely tried by the tortuous politics of Kathiawad. I have asked the workers to confer with Durbar Virawala, to forget me and the Sardar, and if they get enough to satisfy their least wants, they may accept the offer without reference to either of us. I have told Durbar Virawala, 'I am defeated. May you win. Placate the people by giving as much as possible and wire to me so as to revive the hope which I seem to have lost for the moment.' "

President Bose Resigns

1939

At the end of April 1939, Gandhi reached Calcutta to attend the meeting of the A.-I.C.C. About a fortnight earlier he had written to President Bose: "Pandit Pant's resolution I cannot interpret. The more I study it, the more I dislike it. But it does not answer the present difficulty. I cannot, will not, impose a cabinet on you, nor can I guarantee approval by the A.-I.C.C. of your cabinet and policy." On the eve of the stormy session, Gandhi had a discussion with Subhas Bose regarding the personnel of the Working Committee and various other matters connected with the future programme of the Congress. In the course of an interview Gandhi said: "I am fighting for peace, I shall die for peace, peace in the Congress, peace in the states, peace on earth and goodwill amongst men." When he was asked if he had come to Calcutta on a peace mission seeing that he had advised Sardar Patel not to attend the A.-I.C.C., Gandhi said that the reason for the Sardar's not coming was that it was in the best interests of the country to absent himself from Calcutta.

On April 29, the A.-I.C.C. commenced, Gandhi abstaining from the meeting. Subhas Bose explained to the house how his conversation with Gandhi and some members of the old Congress Working Committee had failed to bring about a settlement. Bose read out Gandhi's letter:

"You have asked me to give you in terms of Pandit Pant's resolution the names for the Working Committee. As I have told you in my letters and my telegrams, I feel myself utterly incompetent to do so. Much has happened since Tripuri. Knowing your own views and knowing how most of the members differ in the fundamentals, it seems to me that if I gave you the names it would be an imposition on you. I had argued this position at length in my letters to you. Nothing that has happened during these three days

of closest conversation between us has altered my view. Such being the case, you are free to choose your own committee. I have told you too that you could discuss with the ex-members the possibility of a mutual approach and that nothing would please me better than to know that you were able to come together. Into what has happened since, I need not go. You and the ex-members present will make the position clear before the A.-I.C.C. Only it has been a matter of the greatest grief to me that a mutual settlement has not been possible. I hope, however, that whatever is done will be done with mutual goodwill."

Bose then made a statement tendering his resignation:

"I regret that since the Tripuri Congress I have not been able to announce the personnel of the new Working Committee. This has been due to the circumstances beyond my control. Owing to my illness, I could not proceed to meet Mahatma Gandhi; in lieu thereof, I started correspondence with him. This enabled us to clarify our ideas and viewpoints, but did not bring us to a settlement. When I realized that correspondence had proved ineffective, I wanted to make a frantic effort to meet Mahatmaji at Delhi, but that effort also failed.

"After Mahatmaji's arrival in Calcutta we have had prolonged conversations, but unfortunately they did not lead to any solution. Mahatmaji's advice to me is that I should myself form a Working Committee leaving out the members who resigned from the previous Working Committee. But this advice I cannot give effect to for several reasons. To mention two of the principal reasons, I may say that such a step would be contrary to the directions in Pantji's resolution, which provides *inter alia* that the Working Committee should be formed in accordance with the wishes of Gandhiji and it should command his implicit confidence. If I formed such a committee as advised above, I would not be able to report to you that the committee commanded his implicit confidence.

"Moreover, my conviction is that in view of the critical times that are ahead of us in India and abroad, we should have a composite cabinet commanding the confidence of the largest number of Congressmen possible, reflecting the composition of the general body of the Congress.

"Since I could not implement Mahatmaji's advice, I could only repeat my request that he should kindly shoulder the responsibility

vested in him by the Tripuri Congress and nominate the Working Committee. And I told him that whatever committee he appointed would be binding on me, since it was my determination to implement Pantji's resolution.

"Unfortunately for us, Mahatmaji felt unable to nominate the Working Committee. As a last step, I tried my best to arrive at an informal solution of the problem. Mahatmaji told me that the prominent members of the previous Working Committee and myself should put our heads together and see if we could arrive at an agreement. I concurred and we made that attempt. If we had succeeded in coming to a settlement, we would then have come up before the A.-I.C.C. for formal ratification of our informal agreement. Unfortunately, though we spent several hours in discussing the matter, we could not arrive at a settlement. I have, therefore, to report to you with deep regret that I am unable to announce the personnel of the new Working Committee.

"I have been pondering deeply as to what I could do to help the A.-I.C.C. in solving the problem that is now placed before it. I feel that my presence as president at this juncture may possibly be a sort of obstacle or handicap in its path. For instance, the A.-I.C.C. may feel inclined to appoint a Working Committee in which I shall be a misfit. I feel, further, that it may possibly be easier for the A.-I.C.C. to settle the matter, if it can have a new president. After mature deliberation, therefore, and in an entirely helpful spirit, I am placing my resignation in your hands."

Bose then requested Sarojini Naidu to preside over the meeting. Nehru placed before the house the proposition that President Bose be requested to withdraw his resignation and nominate afresh the Working Committee which functioned in 1938. Nehru said that considering the external and internal situation of the country, it was imperative that a way out must be found to end the controversy raised by Pandit Pant's resolution passed at Tripuri and that the proposition be put before the house, such as would command the largest measure of common agreement. As for the infusion of fresh blood in the Working Committee, he said that two old members of the committee, Jamnalal Bajaj and Jairamdas Doulatram, would be soon resigning their seats on the committee for reasons of health. This would enable Bose to nominate in consultation with his colleagues two new members to the committee.

Bose did not agree to Nehru's suggestion. Ugly scenes followed leading to the break-up of the meeting. Some Congress leaders including Rajendra Prasad were subjected to indignities and Nehru also was not spared.

The A.-I.C.C. re-assembled the following day. Nehru made a statement that the proposition he had put forward previously was with a view to end the controversy and not to impose a Working Committee on Bose, as was made out by some of the speakers on the resolution. That was very far from his intention. He thought it was no use debating the proposition, if it did not meet with the approval of Subhas Bose. He, therefore, requested a definite reply from Bose, whether the proposition met with his approval and he was prepared to withdraw his resignation.

In reply, Subhas Bose said:

"The resolution that is now before the house is one with which I am vitally concerned and it would perhaps help the discussion, if I could indicate my reaction to it. I feel greatly honoured that Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru should move a resolution requesting me to withdraw my resignation. But when I have not tendered my resignation in a light-hearted manner, I should ponder deeply before coming to a decision. This resolution is in effect identical with the suggestion made informally by Mahatma Gandhi and others during my conversations with some of the members of the old Working Committee. Ordinarily Mahatmaji's word is law to me, but where principles are involved, I sometimes feel unable to accept his advice or suggestion.

"When unfortunately Mahatma Gandhi has not found it possible to help us by nominating the new Working Committee, should we attempt to solve the problem without reference to the Congress constitution? I leave it to you, friends, to answer the question.

"I shall now come to the practical aspect of the question. Judging from this point of view, the main question is, what sort of cabinet is needed now and for the next few months?

"Last year, at Haripura, I made three changes in the personnel of the previous cabinet. My own view definitely is that there should be an inclusion of fresh blood every year. To ensure continuity of policy, majority of the old committee members may remain. But in a vast country like India, the highest executive of the Congress should not be made the close reserve of a group of individuals. A

change should, therefore, be made every year under the normal circumstances.

"Now what about an emergency like the present one? You all know that even in countries like Great Britain, where there are well-defined political parties, a war crisis or a national emergency breaks down political barriers and bring on the same committee people who normally regard themselves as deadly opponents. And in continental countries like France, composite cabinets are the order of the day. Are we less patriotic than Britishers or Frenchmen that we cannot do what they can? I refuse to think that we are so inferior to them in quality.

"If we want a strong cabinet with a dynamic urge, it is necessary for us to put representatives of different shades of opinion in the Congress, giving the majority to those who will ensure continuity of policy. If we do not allow this inclusion of fresh blood the cabinet will lose in power and in potency. If in countries like Great Britain, it is necessary to do away with the party cabinets in times of war crisis and substitute national cabinets, do we not feel the same necessity here?

"It may be argued that such composite cabinets will be too heterogeneous to function properly. But such an apprehension is unfounded. Within the A.-I.C.C. or within the Congress, there are different shades of opinion. But do we not have a large measure of agreement among ourselves? Are we not all of us anti-imperialists who accept the present constitution and creed and policy of the Congress? Are not all Congressmen homogeneous in this sense *vis-a-vis* the world outside? I am afraid, that we sometimes give a too narrow meaning to the word 'homogeneity'.

"Let us face the fact that the Congress has changed its composition to some extent since 1921. The change should be reflected in the composition of the Working Committee also, so that that the committee may be truly representative of the general body of the Congress. We should not forget the latent implications of voting at the last presidential election. Shall we not move with the times, see the writing on the wall and adjust ourselves to it?

"I do not know exactly the mind of the A.-I.C.C. today, but I respectfully submit that if you desire that I should continue as president, you should be good enough to show consideration for the views indicated above. If, however, you think otherwise, you

should kindly release me from the responsibility of presidentship. Serious and critical times are ahead of us. We must pool our resources and pull our whole weight, if we are to emerge triumphant out of the external crisis that is fast overtaking us. To this arduous task, I shall, contribute my humble mite. What does it matter if I am not in the presidential chair? My services will be always at the disposal of the Congress and of the country for what they are worth. I claim to have sufficient patriotism and sufficient sense of discipline, to be able to work as an ordinary soldier in this great fight for India's political and economic emancipation."

Mrs. Naidu made an appeal from the chair to Bose to accept the proposition of Nehru. She explained how two seats would be available for infusion of fresh blood in the committee. She also thought that with mutual goodwill, some other changes might be made in the composition of the committee in near future. She requested the president to inform the house of his final decision in the light of Nehru's assurance and her appeal.

In reply, Bose said: "In the statement which I have just made before the house, I thought I made my position perfectly clear. I have nothing to add to what I have stated therein. As to my attitude on the question of resignation, as I said at the beginning, I submitted my resignation in an entirely helpful spirit. If you ask me here and now to give my final reply, as the president had asked me to do, I can say that my reply can only depend on the form of the resolution to be adopted by the A.-I.C.C. At this stage, I do not know what resolution will be adopted by the A.-I.C.C. and until I know that, it is impossible for me to give a final reply."

This was considered by Mrs. Naidu and Nehru as too vague and Nehru sought to withdraw his resolution. Mrs. Naidu requested the members to elect a new president and Rajendra Prasad was elected president for the remaining period of the year.

The third sitting of the A.-I.C.C. commenced on May 1, with Rajendra Prasad in the chair. Opening the proceedings, he said that he had come to the decision that the old Working Committee should continue and that Gandhi had approved of it. He added that it was, however, regrettable that Bose did not see his way to serve on the committee. Nehru also had declined. He concluded saying that the A.-I.C.C. was meeting under very difficult circumstances and, therefore, he suggested that after passing a few

resolutions of a non-controversial matter, the committee should adjourn so that the Working Committee might have time to consider the situation and chalk out the future programme.

Referring to the resolutions to be placed before the A.-I.C.C., Rajendra Prasad said that one of them was about the war. It was true that the Tripuri Congress passed a resolution on this subject but as the matter was very important it was necessary that the attitude of the Congress should be reiterated. The A.-I.C.C., alarmed at the extensive emergency measures, which placed the provincial governments once more entirely under the direction of the Central Government during a state of emergency, declared that the Congress "cannot tolerate an amendment which strikes at the very basis of provincial autonomy and renders it a farce in case of war, which in effect creates a war dictatorship."

The meeting over, Bose announced on May 3 the formation of a new party within the Congress, to be called the Forward Bloc. Its object was to "rally all the radical and anti-imperialist progressive elements in the country on the basis of a minimum programme, representing the greatest common measure of agreement among the radicals of all shades of opinion".

From Calcutta, Gandhi proceeded to Brindaban in Champaran, to open the session of the Gandhi Seva Sangh. Rajendra Prasad unfurling the Tricolour on the occasion said that many persons in the Congress ranks did not observe the principle of non-violence. He would declare emphatically that truth and non-violence were applicable universally. Gandhi then addressed the session:

"I shall choose as the text of my address today one or two things that I said in my statement issued on my departure from Rajkot. Kishorlal Mashruwala has rightly dwelt at length on the principal implication of ahimsa, namely, that ahimsa in us ought to soften and not to stiffen our opponent's attitude to us; it ought to melt him; it ought to strike a responsive chord in his heart. If the function of *himsa* is to devour all it comes across, the function of ahimsa is to rush into the mouth of *himsa*. In an atmosphere of ahimsa, one has no scope to put his ahimsa to the test. It can be tested only in the face of *himsa*.

"I knew all this, and I have been trying to put it into practice, but I cannot say that I have done so always with success. And I cannot say that I have always succeeded in melting the hearts of

my opponents. Rajkot brought a keener realization of this fact in my own mind. I was asking myself why we had failed so far in converting Durbar Virawala. The answer came straight to me that we had not dealt with him in the way of ahimsa. We had sworn at him, and I had shown indifference over the language of satyagrahis. I may have controlled my tongue, but I had not put the similar control on the speech of others.

"The thing dawned on me as in a flash when during my interview with Mr. Gibson, the Resident, I made what he admitted was a sporting offer, of leaving it to the Thakore Saheb to form his own committee. It was then that I discovered what I have called the new technique. It is not without dangers, for the simple reason that I have had to cry a halt to everything that was going on. I had, during the struggle at Rajkot, sought the intervention of the representative of the crown by approaching him during my fast, and since then I had been approaching the Resident, his representative in Rajkot. When I made the sporting offer, I wondered if I might not forget the paramount power and confine my attention to the state alone. But, perhaps, the courage for such a bold step is lacking. I have not yet made up my mind that I should not approach the paramount power in the Rajkot affair, that I should ask the people to tear up the Gwyer Award, and start work with the state on a clean slate. My satyagraha then would be addressed to the state alone, and I should lay down my life in the effort to convert the Rajkot authorities. Then all my experiments should be confined to that unique laboratory—Rajkot. Those experiments would be more complete in terms of ahimsa. At the root of my faint-heartedness, if it is that, is something lacking in my ahimsa.

"And now take the Congress corruption. Why should there be so much corruption in the Congress? How can we with all that corruption deserve the name 'Congressmen'? Some of you are known as 'Gandhi-ites'. 'Gandhi-ites' is no name worth having. Rather than that why not 'ahimsa-ites'? For, Gandhi is a mixture of good and evil, weakness and strength, violence and non-violence, but ahimsa has no adulteration. Now as 'ahimsa-ites' can you say that you practise genuine ahimsa? Can you say that you receive the arrows of the opponent on your breasts without returning them? Can you say that you are not angry, that you are not perturbed by his criticism? I am afraid many cannot say any such thing.

"You will answer back saying that you never claimed to practise ahimsa quite to that extent. If so, I will confess that to that extent my execution was defective. Ahimsa magnifies one's own defects, and minimizes those of the opponent. It regards the mote in one's own eye as a beam and the beam in the opponent's eye as a mote. We have acted to the contrary.

"On the question of the states, we have wanted to reform their administration and to convert the rulers, not to destroy them. But our speech has often belied our profession.

"Though I made that statement about Rajkot, let me assure you that I am not going to leave Rajkot in the lurch, nor desert my co-workers and suffer them to be demoralized. If I were to do so, it would be a sure sign of dotage, and I am aware of no such thing coming over me. On the contrary, I am praying that the workers there may grow every day in strength. I am only pleading for a radical change in the technique.

"Having said this, I now come to the policy of the Gandhi Seva Sangh. If you have followed what I have said so far, you have perhaps realized that we shall have to remodel ourselves. We shall have to examine ourselves critically and find out whether we have stood the test. If in doing so we are found wanting, it would be better to reduce our numbers. Twenty genuine members with a heart belief in truth and ahimsa are better than two hundred indifferent ones. They will one day drag us to destruction, the twenty may one day increase to two hundred genuine ones.

"Has not corruption crept into the sangh too? Have not the members given way to hypocrisy, suspicion, mutual distrust? I do not know all the members, I know the names of only a few, and I am not speaking from personal knowledge. I am speaking from limited experience. Jamnalalji is unfortunately not here today. He has very often shared with me his experience of many institutions with which he is connected. Why should it be difficult to run them smoothly? Why can't we, with any amount of confidence, fling our workers from one part of the country to another to take charge of the work there?

"All this I say not to find fault with you, but in order to drive home the necessity of discipline and strict observance of our own principles. A satyagrahi should have a living faith in God. That is because he has no other strength but that of his unflinching faith

in Him. Without that faith how can he undertake satyagraha? I would ask any of you who feels that he has no such faith to leave the Gandhi Seva Sangh, and to forget the name of satyagraha.

"How many of you have a living faith in the spinning wheel? Do you believe in it as a symbol of non-violence? If we had that faith, our spinning would have a potency all its own. Spinning is even more potent than civil disobedience. The latter may provoke anger and ill will, spinning provokes no such feeling. My faith in the spinning wheel I declared twenty years ago. I am declaring it again with the added strength of my twenty years' experience. If you feel you have no such faith, I would again ask you to forget satyagraha.

"Shri Prajapati Misra said that he had been able to introduce some spinning wheels in villages within a radius of five miles from here. What is there in this to be proud of? Laxmi Babu has organized a good exhibition, but there was nothing there to send me into raptures. Bihar which boasts of so many good workers should have no home without a spinning wheel. We can change the face of Bihar, if we all know what a potent force the spinning wheel is. I am not talking of the thousands of our starving sisters who must spin for their bread, but I am talking of those who profess to believe in truth and non-violence. The moment they realize that spinning is the symbol of non-violence, it will serve as a beacon light to them; it will inspire all their conduct; they will regard all waste of time as criminal, their language will be free of all offensive expression, they will not think an idle thought.

"By itself, the wheel is a lifeless thing, but it becomes a living thing when we attribute certain virtues to it. Even Ramanam is by itself lifeless, but it has become a living symbol of the deity because millions upon millions of people have consecrated it. Even a sinner may turn the wheel and add to the nation's wealth. I know people who have told me that the music of the spinning wheel has stilled their lust and other passions.

"And, it is because I have invested the spinning wheel with that power, that it has become so essential to the satyagraha of my conception in India. When I wrote *Hind Swaraj* in 1909, I had not even seen a spinning wheel. In fact, I had even mistaken a loom for a spinning wheel. But, even then, it was for me a symbol of non-violence. Let me, therefore, repeat that I do not want people

to launch satyagraha, if they have no such belief in the spinning wheel. They may offer satyagraha on their own, but I could be of no use to them.

"Now as regards the question of corruption in the Congress, the best way in which we can help to eradicate corruption is by purifying ourselves. The problem in its organizational aspect will have to be tackled by the Congress. For, truth and non-violence are no less articles of its creed than yours. The Congress can change it; you may not.

"I come now to what is called the 'Gandhian' ideology and the means of propagating it. Propagation of truth and non-violence can be done less by books than by actual living on those principles. Life truly lived is more than books. I do not say that we may not issue books and newspapers. I only say that they are not indispensable. If we are the true devotees of truth and ahimsa, God will endow us with the requisite intellect to solve problems. That devotion presupposes the will to understand our opponent's viewpoint. We must make a sincere effort to enter into his mind and to understand his viewpoint. That is what is meant by non-violence walking straight into the mouth of violence. If we are armed with that attitude of mind, we may hope to propagate ahimsa principles. Without that, book and newspaper propaganda is of no avail. You do not know with what indifference I used to run *Young India.* I did not shed a single tear when *Young India* had to be stopped. But satyagraha, which it was intended to help, survived it. For, satyagraha does not depend on the outside help, it derives all its strength from within."

Two days were devoted to questions and answers. "Why," it was asked, "did you not issue before the presidential election the statement that you issued after it? That might have prevented Tripuri and its sequel."

Gandhi answered: "The statement issued over the signature of Sardar Patel and others was issued from Bardoli where I then was. It contained a sentence or a paragraph indicating my position, and that should have been enough. And let me also tell you that I had wired my opinion to Subhas Babu."

"But then you have said in one of your letters to Subhas Babu that the more you read Pantji's resolution the more you disliked it. Some newspapers suggested that you were being kept regularly

informed, and your correspondence leads one to think that you had not seen the resolution. What is the truth?"

"When the resolution was being discussed, I was on my penitential bed in Rajkot, and my mind was occupied exclusively by Rajkot matter. Someone mentioned to me that a resolution expressing confidence in the old programme was being discussed, but I was unaware of the language in which it was couched. Originally, that is, before Tripuri, when Subhas Babu saw me in Wardha, I told him that the most straightforward course would be to bring a no-confidence resolution, that is, if it could be discussed without passion or bitterness. That, I took it, was not thought possible at the Tripuri Congress and Pantji's resolution was adopted in order to avoid personalities and passion. When later, Subhas Babu wrote to me about Pantji's resolution, I read it carefully with his frankly expressed opinion on it, and I considered from the point of view of its application to me. It was with that thing in view that I said that the more I read the resolution, the more I disliked it. The obvious reason was that it would be nothing short of imposition on Subhas Babu to suggest to him the only names I could, as I knew it would not be possible for Subhas Babu to work with them. This is what I impressed on Subhas Babu throughout my talks with him at Calcutta, and I am quite sure that I served the country by firmly adhering to my view."

"But Subhas Babu had agreed to accept all the names that you would suggest!"

"How could I abuse his readiness to accept my names? Supposing someone came and said to me that I was at liberty to swear at him or hammer him, should I avail myself of the liberty? Well I suggest that to have imposed my choice on Subhas Babu would have been an outrage on his feelings. There is a world of difference between what you may do and what you ought to do."

"But at the basis of the whole thing is what is known as the fundamental difference between you and Subhas Babu. Could you indicate the difference briefly?"

"Take his proposed ultimatum to the British Government. He thinks that the situation is ripe now for throwing a challenge to the British Government. I feel that it is impossible to inaugurate and conduct a non-violent campaign today. We have no control on those who believe in violence. Rampur, Ramdurg and Cawnpore

are the pointers. Pantji had little non-violent control of the situation in Cawnpore and the other cities in U.P. and the Shia-Sunni trouble is a fresh species of the difficulties that we have to face. We have not only no control over the non-Congressmen, but little over even the Congressmen. There was a time, when the bulk of the country used to listen to us; today, even many Congressmen are out of our hands. I cannot think of organizing a Dandi salt march today. The atmosphere is altogether unpropitious. Subhas Babu thinks otherwise.

"Take again our views on corruption in the Congress ranks. I would go to the length of giving the whole Congress organization a decent burial, rather than put up with the corruption that is rampant. I do not know that I could take all members of the Working Committee with me in this view. I know that I cannot possibly take Subhas Babu with me.

"In brief, I believe that violence and corruption are rampant. He does not share my belief and, therefore, his programmes and plans must necessarily differ from mine."

"Have you the same differences with the socialists and Pandit Jawaharlal?"

"Do not mix up things. The idea of ultimatum originated with Subhas Babu and I do not know how many accept it. And besides there are differences between Jawaharlal and other socialist friends. My fundamental difference with the socialists is well known. I believe in conversion of human nature and in striving for it. They do not believe in this. But let me tell you that we are coming nearer one another. Either they are being drawn to me, or I am being drawn to them. As for Jawaharlal, we know that neither of us can do without the other, for there is a heart union between us which no intellectual differences can break.

"But I want to take you a little further. If you are all true to your creed, the questions that you have asked ought not to have been asked. We believe in *sarvadharmasamanatva*—having equal regard for all the faiths and creeds. Therefore, we should have equal regard for the creeds of rightists and leftists so called. Equal regard does not mean that you should adopt the other view, as my equal respect for Islam or Christianity does not mean that I would adopt either of the two. My equal regard compels me to understand their viewpoint and to appreciate the light in which they look upon their

religion. It means that we should emphasize the points of agreement and not make much of the points of difference.

"And why should it be difficult to discover all possible points of agreement? The royal road to the discovery is trust and straight approach. There are two golden precepts in the Bible—not that there are not similar ones in our own scriptures, but these occur to me at the moment—"Agree with thine adversary quickly" and "Let not sun set upon your wrath." Unless you act according to these precepts, you are not worthy members of the sangh, for both flow from the central principle of ahimsa. Marching right into the jaws of *himsa* means nothing else, nothing less.

"This is what I felt like telling you, when I was told that some of you were harbouring suspicions about the Sardar. You must go straight to him and ask for his explanation. If it fails to satisfy you, if you think his explanation does not stand the test of ahimsa, you would be well advised to let the Sardar retire from the Gandhi Seva Sangh.

"The differences, I hope, are temporary. But if they become the insuperable barriers, the sooner we wind up the sangh the better. For, the sangh presupposes the possibility of organizing the forces of truth and non-violence. But if we have to discuss our differences eternally, we should own that we at least are incapable of organizing these forces.

"But that leads me to the very vital question you have asked—'What is the relation between constructive work and non-violence? Why are they so intimately connected?' Well, I think it is obvious enough that Hindu-Muslim unity, prohibition, and the abolition of untouchability are impossible without non-violence. Then remains only the spinning wheel. How does it become the symbol of non-violence? As I have already explained, the essential thing is the spirit in which you regard it, the attributes you invest it with. It is no quinine pill which has certain inherent properties in it, apart from what you think about it. The spinning wheel has no such inherent property. Take the Gayatri mantra. It cannot have the same effect on non-Hindus as it has on me, nor can the Kalma have the same reaction on me as it has on the Muslims. Even so the spinning wheel in itself has nothing which can teach ahimsa or bring swaraj. But you have to think it with those attributes and it is transformed. Its obvious value is the service of the poor, but that

does not necessarily mean that it should be a symbol of non-violence or an indispensable condition for swaraj. But we since 1920 have connected the wheel with swaraj and non-violence.

"Then there is the programme of self-purification with which the spinning wheel is again intimately connected. Coarse home-spun signifies simplicity of life and, therefore, purity.

"Without the spinning wheel, without the Hindu-Muslim unity and without the abolition of untouchability, there can be no civil disobedience. Civil disobedience presupposes willing obedience of our self-imposed rules, and without it civil disobedience would be a cruel joke. This is what came to me with redoubled conviction in the laboratory at Rajkot. If even one man fulfils all the conditions, he is capable of winning swaraj. I am still far from being that ideal satyagrahi. I said the same thing at the time we met to organize a satyagraha campaign against the Rowlatt Act. When it was started we had only a handful of men, but we built up a considerable organization out of that handful. As I am an imperfect satyagrahi, I want your co-operation. In the process of organizing and seeking your co-operation I myself grow, for my introspection never ceases. Even the time I am now giving you is as much in my own interest, as in yours, or at least in my own interest, if not in yours. For as I examine myself, I am growing and evolving. No one is too old to grow, certainly not I. In the Transvaal, satyagraha was born, but a few thousands wielded it there. Millions have wielded it in India. Who knew that on the 6th of April 1919, millions would rise up like one man in response to the call I had made from Madras? But the constructive programme is essential for the ultimate success, indeed I think we should be untrue to the nation, if we did not fulfil the programme of the spinning wheel as a symbol of non-violence, no matter how long it takes."

Then the questions centred round the right conduct of the sangh members. Many of the members contented themselves with a bare maintenance wage. Some were allowed stipends from the sangh and some found their expenses from other sources. Everyone was expected to be armed with the faith that the labourer is worthy of his hire. But there were some places where this hire might not be obtainable from the people who were served. The worker had, in such a case, to fall back upon some means of livelihood. What may these means be?

Gandhi replied: "Any occupation, clean, honourable and calculated to serve as an example to the people would be good enough. I may give as examples, scavenging, spinning and weaving. The occupation should, if possible, be such as touches the interest of the masses and may spur on to use their hands and feet. One may win one's livelihood by teaching, and similar other pursuits, but it all depends on one's own needs, of which the maximum must always be fixed."

Another sangh member raised the familiar question of *varna*. Instead of going into its genesis or explaining the principle of division of labour—divorced from the idea of superiority or inferiority—on which it was based, Gandhi simply said there was no need to discuss the question: "For there is only one *varna* today—all of us are Shudras or, if you please, Harijans. And if we all regard ourselves as Shudras, the idea of superiority or of inferiority that we have imported into it would automatically go, one would cease to look down on the other, and false classification would come to an end. It would also be in accord with reality. Where is the real Brahmin today, content with a bare living and giving all his time to study and teaching? Where is the Kshatriya ready to lay down his life for the honour of his fellowmen, or of his country? Where is the Vaishya, glorying in adding to the nation's wealth and using his own wealth for the benefit of the poor? As for the poor Shudra, he toils and slaves, as though he were a beast of burden, far from rejoicing in the service he is expected to render. Let us, therefore, pursue our callings according to our own bents and our temperaments, content to earn according to our barest needs, and careless of labelling ourselves as Brahmins, Kshatriyas, etc. That will put an end to all bickerings arising out of different 'isms'—socialism, communism and Gandhism."

More serious were questions about work in hostile areas where constant propaganda was being carried on against the Gandhian school of thought, where those who led it, including Gandhi, were being reviled. Some sangh workers were finding it difficult to overtake this propaganda, and if they tried to do so, much of the time to be devoted to work would be wasted. And if the bulk of the people did not want or did not care for their work?

"The minimum condition," replied Gandhi, "is a few yards of ground to build your hut on, or a little house to live in. If you get

either of these, you need not be deterred by any amount of apathy. Your service, even if it is not wanted today, will be acceptable tomorrow. Let them revile the leaders. So long as you do not revile in return, it does not matter. If you are threatened, you must welcome the opportunity. Let them hammer you or burn down your hut. That will be the true test of your desire to serve them. And why should criticism of your leaders hurt you? If there is no truth in it, I can afford to laugh at it. If there is truth in it, I get an opportunity to reform myself. This hostile atmosphere need not scare us away. The words 'fight' and 'defeat' do not exist in the satyagrahi's dictionary. It goes without saying that workers working in such an atmosphere ought not to look to the people for their living, but must earn it themselves."

"Similarly, hostile is the atmosphere in the Indian states. There are all kinds of reactionary forces ranged on the side of the states, and it is sometimes impossible to prevent clashes. What about work there?" This was the next question.

Gandhi replied: "That is why I have deliberately advised suspension of civil disobedience in all the states. Where a clash is inevitable, the satyagrahi will be content to rest on his oars. We may be prepared to lay down our lives, but if, in the result, the poor people whom we want to serve are crushed, we would be well advised in lying low. It is in that sense that I said that Rajkot has become a laboratory for me. There are circumstances where anything but constructive work is impossible. We have then to hitch our waggon to that single star, forgetting for the moment the fight for responsible government and swaraj."

In his inaugural address, Gandhi had said that belief in God was one of the indispensable qualifications of a satyagrahi. One of the members asked if some of the socialists and communists, who did not believe in God, could not be satyagrahis.

"I am afraid not," said Gandhi. "For, a satyagrahi has no other stay but God, and he who has any other stay or depends on any other help cannot offer satyagraha. He may be a passive resister, non-co-operator and so on, but not a true satyagrahi. It is open to you to argue that this excludes brave comrades, whereas it may include men who profess a belief in God, but in daily lives are untrue to their profession. I am not talking of those who are untrue to their profession. I am talking of those who are prepared in

the name of God to stake their all for the sake of their principle. Don't ask me why I am enunciating this principle today and did not do so twenty years ago. I can only say that I am no prophet, I am an erring mortal, progressing from blunder towards truth. 'What about the Buddhists and Jains then?' someone has asked. I will say that if the Buddhists and Jains raise this objection themselves, and say that they would be disqualified if such a strict rule were observed, I should say to them that I agree with them.

"But far be it from me to suggest that you should believe in the God that I believe in. Maybe your definition is different from mine but your belief in that God must be your ultimate mainstay. It may be some Supreme Power or some Being even indefinable, but belief in it is indispensable. To bear all kinds of tortures without a murmur of resentment is not possible for a human being without the strength that comes from God. Only in His strength, we are strong. And only those, who can cast their cares and their fears on that Immeasurable Power, have faith in God."

"Someone may not be a khadi-wearer and yet his heart may be fired with patriotism. He may even have given up his legal practice and yet may not be a khadi-wearer. What about him?

"Such a one may be an estimable man," he replied, "but why should he do civil disobedience? There are various ways of service. Millions need not be civil resisters. The field of constructive work is open to them. Some special rigid discipline is necessary for civil resisters. The privilege of resisting or disobeying a particular law or order accrues only to him, who gives willing and unswerving obedience to the laws laid down for him. This may exclude men who may be otherwise far worthier than the common men who observe the satyagrahi's code. These others may perform worthier tasks, but not civil disobedience."

There were still more questions. "There is one who believes in ahimsa and truth, satisfies other conditions, but is compelled by the circumstances, say, to sell foreign cloth. Would he then come under the ban?"

"Of course," he said. "We can't be too strict in this matter."

"And what is the scope of freedom from bad habits? Is tobacco-smoking a bad habit? Or *pan*-chewing?"

"I may not fix the limit. It must be understood that all intoxicants warp or cloud man's intellect, and he who allows his intellect

to be warped or clouded cannot offer satyagraha. But I will not be a judge in this matter. Ganja, bhang, opium, etc., are recognized intoxicants and come under prohibition. Not so tobacco, though I cannot quite understand how men can bear to foul their mouths with smoking and tobacco-chewing."

At Brindaban, practical questions cropped up. The choice of the site of the forthcoming session of the Congress in Bihar formed a subject of an interesting discussion between Gandhi and the Bihar workers, led by Rajendra Prasad. Phulwari Shareef, which was only four miles from Patna and said to have various other advantages, had been proposed. But Gandhi said:

"You won't count nearness to Patna an advantage. We want to go to the villages. Is Bihar going to drag us back?"

"Time is very short, the city affords various conveniences, there would be less expenditure."

Gandhi: "But that means that we change the policy we have been carrying out for the last three years? Why not Brindaban itself? Don't emulate Haripura and Faizpur. You should excel both in simplicity and in freedom from splendour."

"Visitors are a problem, especially in Bihar where we should have lakhs of them."

Gandhi: "You should make arrangements for them as the Arya Samajists do. They ask everyone to come with their provisions, lanterns, etc. They only provide them accommodation under the trees and water. For this last, no water-works are necessary. Whatever you do, do not accept defeat and run to Patna. No need for the electricity at all, and as we meet in winter, no fans would be needed. Start work from eight to eleven, and then from two or three to seven. A little winter's sun would be more agreeable than otherwise. No, you must try your best to change your decision for Phulwari. Everyone must be asked to bring his or her own lantern. You can say beforehand, you can give so much and no more."

"Even so, we should have to spend a lot on construction. We must afford protection against cold."

Gandhi: "Why not use your grass for warmth, both above and below? There should be no need for cots, excepting for the ill and the infirm."

"And we won't get money. Both the zamindars and kisans are against us. The gate money will be much less."

Gandhi: "I don't agree. Have it somewhere but not near a city. And you have had the tube-wells here very cheaply."

"We will have the tube-wells, but we have to cope with the need of nearly 6,000 gallons of water per hour. But electric light may be dispensed with."

Gandhi: "I hate it. We must not think in terms of illuminations. Make the place attractive in other ways during the day. Do not copy what is bad. And no one will blame you, if you have no fire-works and no illuminations. You want cleanliness and simple wants satisfied. Give the simplest food. But I agree that you must spend on water. Collect one pice per head from each of 70,000 villages and satisfy your needs. Then it will be a Congress worth going to for seeing. Decide on the principle of a village. I don't mind where it may be, and you will gain strength by getting every village to contribute its mite. Volunteer corps must be enough and efficient. They must be experts in sanitation. No smell and no dirt must be allowed. Organization of this must begin early."

"But the volunteer corps will cost us a good deal—probably Rs. 50,000."

Gandhi: "I don't mind it. The ultimate benefit accruing will be great. There should be no wastage in training. We may forget the uniforms, etc., which go to waste, but the body of youth for our service is for all time an asset of no mean value. Therefore, don't stint in water and volunteers."

"Even the simple huts put up here have cost a lot."

Gandhi: "I hear so. But there must have been some mismanage-ment somewhere, if it has become so expensive."

"Our problem is of rain, which very often comes then. Patna would have been convenient from that point of view. We could shift into pukka buildings in case of need."

Gandhi: "There is no escape from it now. Don't give hot water, don't give fruit, don't give any delicacies. Give me the contract for fruit. If any one comes to me for it, I shall ask him to return to Bombay."

Gandhi was frank in his criticism of the sangh arrangements too: "We may not forget that we have to grow every day in simplicity, rural-mindedness, cleanliness and purification. Our annual gather-ing is not a festival or a picnic party. Well, it is a training camp, affording a unique opportunity for self-introspection, for exchange

of experiences, for training in self-restraint and disciplined living. Why should we feel as I felt at the end of six days, that the sooner we could get home the better? The sanitary arrangements and all other living conditions should be so perfect, that we should not mind, if we had to stay on for six months. But evidently we have to make much headway. We are far away still from the ideal that I have pictured to myself. This is not to say that I have found nothing here to praise. You have put in plenty of work, but my function is not to praise but to guide you for the future."

The sangh session came to an end by May 10. The following resolution was passed:

"The object of the Gandhi Seva Sangh is to serve the people through constructive activities in accordance with Gandhiji's principles. As for the fulfilment of that object, it is necessary to participate in political activities also; the sangh has always permitted its members to take part in politics. But, inasmuch as, even political activities must be conducted on the foundation of truth and non-violence, the attention of the members of the sangh is emphatically drawn to the following self-evident rules of conduct, namely, that the members must follow Gandhiji's policy and teachings; that they must not only personally observe truth and non-violence very scrupulously, but should also refrain from taking any advantage of the acts of their other colleagues if they are inconsistent therewith, and should, to the best of their ability, endeavour to make them observe the same principles."

Gwyer Award Renounced

1939

GANDHI returned to Rajkot on May 12, 1939. He had learnt that his statement issued some three weeks ago, had been resented by some Rajkot Parishad workers. They felt perturbed at the idea of negotiating a settlement by themselves with Virawala whom they regarded as the source of all evil in Rajkot. A few of them had even issued a statement in which they had declared their disbelief in the philosophy of converting one's enemy. Some others were of opinion that the implementing of the terms of the December 26 notification should be insisted upon. Gandhi elucidated his own position to the workers within two hours of his arrival in Rajkot:

"I wonder why my statement of April 23 should have perturbed some of you. I said nothing new in it. It was a summary of what I had told you in detail just before I left Rajkot.

"So far as Vajubhai and his colleagues' statement is concerned, let me tell you that I have rather liked it, inasmuch as it has served to bring out in clear relief the fundamental differences between his group and me. The council of action, it is stated, was constituted by the *parishad* for the specific purpose of conducting the civil disobedience struggle. Now that it has been called off, its function has lapsed. I can quite understand the objection to negotiating a settlement in its name. But I am not conducting the negotiations in the council's name.

"And let me explain my own position in this matter. When the award was first announced, under the exultation of the moment, I allowed myself to say that the result of my fast had exceeded my expectations. But I now find that the Chief Justice's award has become a halter round my neck.

"I did not come here at your invitation. I came here because Rajkot is the home of my childhood and because I felt I would be able to keep its ruler to his promises. In the various steps which

I have taken since my arrival here, I had been guided solely by my inner light and by the logic of circumstances. Nobody is under any obligation to join me in my present experiment. Anybody who feels differently from me is perfectly free to go his way; and if the people of Rajkot decide to carry on the fight by following different methods, I would not mind it. I am humble enough to know that there may be a different way and a better way than mine of doing a thing. In no case, do I want to see people turn into cowards.

"I welcome the suggestion about calling the *parishad* and obtaining its mandate with regard to the future line of action. But I would like you not to shut your eyes to the realities of the situation. I am trying the delicate and difficult technique of negotiating a settlement with Durbar Virawala by appealing to the better self in him, while at the same time I am pursuing the stages contemplated in the award. The Rajkot issue is not so simple or superficial, as it might appear at first sight. Behind it are ranged other and powerful forces.

"Eighteen days have elapsed since I discussed with you the new line of approach to the Rajkot question. The passage of time has confirmed my opinion. I confess that I was guilty of impatience when I wrote to Mr. Gibson about the interminable delays and to the Bhayats about their suggestion to refer to the Chief Justice the meaning of my assurance to them. Such impatience reflects little credit on my ahimsa. My legal position was correct. But, ahimsa does not go by legal rights.

"I have now realized that I must be content to plod on with infinite patience. It is no mango trick that can be performed in the twinkling of an eye. It calls for a more potent force than even civil disobedience, namely, the application of the active principle that lies at the core of ahimsa. This is the new light that I sense I have seen. I see it but dimly. I am, therefore, unable to define it.

"I should very much like, if I could, altogether to give up the shelter of the award before proceeding with the work of appeasing Durbar Shri Virawala. But that requires courage, fearlessness and ample faith. If I had these, I should not hesitate to plunge into a blazing fire. But such faith cannot come by mechanical means. One must wait and pray for it. I had no idea of what jail life was like, when I launched on satyagraha in South Africa. But once inside the prison it became to me like a palace, a sanctuary, a place

of pilgrimage, where I learnt things which probably I would not have outside.

"If I had to act only for myself, then I would not have hesitated to take the plunge. But as a custodian of the people's interests, I wonder if I should run any risks. Thus has conscience turned me into a coward and I am vacillating between doubt and faith.

"My ahimsa tells me that I must tear up the award. But the reason is not yet fully convinced. 'What is the meaning of not seeking aid from the paramount power,' I argue to myself, 'when you are trying to secure the co-operation of Durbar Virawala and the Thakore Saheb? Are they not all parts of one and the same system?' Thus I am caught in the net of my own reasoning. All this I know is a sign of lack of faith on my part.

"I cannot, while there is this conflict between the head and the heart within me, offer to take you along with me or be of much use to you as a 'guide'. I have no set theory to go by. I have not worked out the science of satyagraha in its entirety. I am still groping. You can join me in my quest, if it appeals to you and you feel the call.

"A representative is bound to consult his principals and to take his instructions from them at every step. But a physician cannot afford to do so regarding his patients. He must be guided solely by his instinct and vary his treatment according to his reading of the symptoms as they might develop from moment to moment. He cannot accept dictation of the patient. I stand in a dual capacity in relation to you. I am your spokesman, whom you have also accepted as your physician. You must implicitly follow the treatment laid down by your physician so long as you have faith in him. If he no longer commands your confidence, you must appoint in his place another who does.

"Only a prospective mother knows what it is to carry. The onlookers notice her illness and pity her. But she alone knows the travail. It is I who have conceived satyagraha. Mine alone must be the travail and the suffering. I am not joking. I am in dreadful earnest. I shall enter the fiery gates and pursue my mission, even if I am the only person left to do so. I am resolved to try and exhaust every resource of satyagraha to convert Durbar Virawala. If I succeed, you will all share the fruit. If I fail, the responsibility will be entirely mine and what I do will in no way affect you.

"When I was a little child, there used to be two blind master performers in Rajkot. One of them was a musician. When he played on his instrument, his fingers swept the strings with an unerring instinct and everybody listened spellbound to his playing. Similarly there are chords in every human heart. If we only know how to strike the right chord, we bring out the music.

"Durbar Virawala is no exception to the rule.

"Have I set Durbar Virawala completely at his ease? Have I applied truth and ahimsa only in my own dealings with him? Have I not threatened him with the award?

"We want to set up democracy in Rajkot. A born democrat is a born disciplinarian. Democracy comes naturally to him, who is habituated normally to yield willing obedience to all laws, human or divine. I claim to be a democrat, both by instinct and training. Let those who are ambitious to serve democracy, qualify themselves by satisfying first this acid test of democracy. Moreover, a democrat must be utterly selfless. He must think and dream not in terms of self or of party, but only of democracy. Only then does he acquire the right of civil disobedience. I do not want anybody to give up his own convictions or to suppress himself. I do not believe that a healthy and honest difference of opinion will injure our cause. But opportunism or camouflage or patched-up compromises certainly will. If you must dissent, you should take care that your opinions voice your innermost conviction and are not intended merely as a convenient party cry.

"Today our democracy is choked by internecine strife. We are torn by dissensions—dissensions between Hindus and Musalmans, Brahmins and non-Brahmins, Congressmen and Congressmen. It is no easy task to evolve democracy out of this mobocracy. Let us not make confusion worse confounded by further introducing into it the virus of sectionalism and party spirit.

"I value individual freedom, but you must not forget that man is essentially a social being. He has risen to this present status by learning to adjust his individualism to the requirements of social progress. Unrestricted individualism is the law of the beast of the jungle. We have learnt to strike the mean between individual freedom and social restraint. Willing submission to social restraint for the sake of the well-being of the whole society, enriches both the individual and the society of which he is a member."

The "new light" was coming slowly. The award completely vindicated the Sardar but Gandhi was very much disturbed. "Would it be possible to implement the award in the existing atmosphere in Rajkot? Would it not be a noose round our neck rather than a Gordian knot untied?" He offered to sacrifice clear majority and have a bare majority with the Thakore Saheb's nominees, or to do without a full committee under notification. The Viceroy asked him to come to whatever arrangements he liked with the Thakore Saheb of Rajkot, but no arrangements could be made over the Thakore Saheb's head. The award was such a bugbear to Durbar Virawala that he placed many hurdles in the way. He inflamed the sectional and communal feelings in Rajkot.

It was in the contemplative atmosphere of Brindaban that Gandhi began to reflect on the situation. He thought that the award was an incubus, not only for himself but for Virawala. In a letter to Virawala, dated May 12, he mentioned "the double game".

He lost no opportunity of thinking aloud before the co-workers. "The statement I made on leaving Rajkot correctly represented my state of mind. The views I expressed are, if anything, stronger today. I own that I was impatient. The award which was a tainted fruit made me impatient. The impatience was a slur on my ahimsa. It was that impatience that made me say to the Bhayats and the Muslims that I was not prepared to wait for Sir Maurice Gwyer's Award on their reference, the work of the committee must go on. There was no committee then, but impatience made me speak so." Again: "There is no doubt in my mind that the award must be renounced. How can I woo Durbar Virawala and also keep the sword of the award hanging over his head? But where is the courage? The faint-heartedness is unworthy of a satyagrahi who must have nothing but faith in God to sustain him."

In three days, he went further: "What is that prevents me from throwing the award overboard? It is not only faint-heartedness but it smacks of diplomacy. If I want Durbar Virawala to act on the square, I must relieve his fears too. Why should he have to remain in fear of the paramount power and not do what he can of his own free will? I am talking so much of ahimsa, but I am not walking fearlessly into the mouth of *himsa*. A satyagrahi seeks no adventitious aid—not of world forces, not of the paramount power. He deals directly with his opponent and wins him by love and by

utter self-surrender to God. The very difficulty of implementing the award, the very fact that it has proved a Pandora's box shows that God wants me to throw it away, however seemingly fruitful of future good it may be. He seems to be speaking to me in strident tones: 'Your victory was no victory. Throw it away.' You want me to go on with the work of the award because it belongs to you. How can I go on with it, when my courage fails me, my hands are shaking, and I am faltering? It is a moral issue with me. The consciousness of the wrong of the initial step I took, oppresses me and I cannot go on with it. What will you do with such a halting faltering general? I must throw the award overboard, and you in your turn may throw the general overboard."

On May 17, Gandhi made up his mind. The Bhayats' and the Muslims' statements had already appeared. He began dictating the reply but then he said: "Why this burden on the Chief Justice when I do not want to benefit by his award which has given rise to this reference? Even if he decides this reference in my favour—as I am sure he must—I have no use for it." And with this he retired into silence and sat down to write the statement finally renouncing the award:

"I said when I left for Calcutta on the 24th ultimo that, Rajkot had proved a laboratory for me. The latest proof of the fact lies in the step I am now announcing. After an exhaustive discussion with my co-workers, I came to the conclusion at six o'clock this evening that I should renounce the award of the Chief Justice.

"I recognize my error. At the end of my fast, I had permitted myself to say that it had succeeded as no previous fast had done. I now see that it was tainted with *himsa*. In taking the fast I sought immediate intervention of the paramount power, so as to induce fulfilment of the promise made by the Thakore Saheb. This was not the way of ahimsa or conversion. It was the way of *himsa* or coercion. My fast to be pure should have been addressed only to the Thakore Saheb, and I should have been content to die, if it could not have melted his heart or rather that of his adviser Durbar Shri Virawala. My eyes would not have been opened, if I had not found unexpected difficulties in my way. Durbar Shri Virawala was no willing party to the award. Naturally, he was in no obliging mood. He, therefore, took advantage of every opportunity to cause delay. The award, instead of making my way smooth, became a

potent cause of angering the Muslims and the Bhayats against me. Before the award, we met as friends. Now I am accused of having committed a breach of promise voluntarily and without any consideration made by me. The matter was to go to the Chief Justice for decision, as to whether I was guilty of the alleged breach of promise. The statements of the Muslim Council and the Girasia Association are before me. Now that I have taken the decision to renounce the award, there is no occasion for me to answer the two cases. So far as I am concerned, the Muslims and the Bhayats can have anything the Thakore Saheb may be pleased to give them. I must apologize to them for having put them to the trouble of preparing their cases.

"I owe an apology to the Viceroy for the unnecessary strain I have put upon him in my weakness. I apologize to the Chief Justice for having been the cause of putting him to the labour which had I known better, he need not have gone through. Above all, I apologize to the Thakore Saheb and Durbar Virawala. So far as the latter is concerned, I must own that, in common with my co-workers, I have harboured evil thoughts about him. I do not here pause to consider, whether charges made against him were true or not. This is not the place to discuss them. Suffice it to say that the way of ahimsa was not and has not been applied to him.

"And let it be said to my discredit that I have been guilty of playing what may be called a double game, that is, hanging the sword of the award over his head, and wooing him and expecting him of his own free will to advise the Thakore Saheb to grant liberal reforms.

"And this method, I admit, is wholly inconsistent with ahimsa. When all of a sudden, I made what is known as a sporting offer to Mr. Gibson on 19th April, I discovered my weakness. But I had not the courage then and there to say, 'I do not want to have anything to do with the award.' Instead I said, 'Let the Thakore Saheb appoint his own committee and then the *parishad* people will examine the report in terms of the award, and if it is found defective it can go to the Chief Justice.' Durbar Virawala detected a flaw and very properly rejected the offer saying: 'You are still hanging the award over my head and want to become a court of appeal over the Thakore Saheb's committee. If such is the case, you must take your pound of flesh and no more.' I saw the force

of his objection. I told him too that I lacked the courage then to throw the award overboard, but that I would still plead with him to come to terms with the people, as if the award was not in existence and as if the Sardar and I had also withdrawn. He promised to try. He tried in his own fashion but not with a large heart. I do not blame him. How could I expect a large heart when he knew my faint-heartedness in clinging to the award?

"Only trust can beget trust. I lacked it myself. But at last, I have regained my lost courage. My faith in the sovereign efficacy of ahimsa burns brighter for my confession and repentance.

"I must not do any injustice to my co-workers. Many of them are filled with misgivings. My exposition of ahimsa is new to them. They see no cause for my repentance. And they think that I am giving up a great chance created by the award. They think that, as a political leader, I have no right to play fast and loose with the fortunes of 75,000 souls, maybe of the whole of the people of Kathiawad. I have told them that their fears are unjustified, and that every act of purification and every accession of courage, adds to the strength of the cause of a people affected by a movement of satyagraha. I have told them too that if they regard me as their general and expert of satyagraha, they must put up with what may appear to them to be my vagaries.

"Having now freed the Thakore Saheb and his adviser from the oppression of the award, I have no hesitation in appealing to them to appease the people of Rajkot by fulfilling their expectations and dispelling their misgivings."

Gandhi's decision puzzled even his closest associates. Mahadev Desai asked him: "How was it wrong to request the paramount power to intervene? You did not insist on the letter of your vow. Otherwise, you might have said that you could not break the fast until your demand was satisfied. But you were content with the arbitration of the Chief Justice. Even so in 1917, when you fasted during the Ahmedabad labour strike you did not insist on thirty-five per cent increase in wage, but you contented yourself with the millowners consenting to an arbitration. In fact, if the Thakore Saheb had yielded to your demand without the intervention of the paramount power, he might have charged you with having coerced him. But here the arbitration, which was the result of the fast, ought to have been given you even without the fast."

"You are right," said Gandhi. "But why don't you see that in 1917, the arbitration was offered by the millowners? If the Thakore Saheb had offered an arbitration of his own accord, it would have been splendid. But here I appealed to the paramount power. That is why the arbitration has been infructuous. I had no business to be impatient. Instead of waiting on God and allowing my fast to work itself, I sought outside aid. It was a grave blunder."

"But," said Mahadev, "why not wait until Sir Maurice Gwyer gives his decision on the new reference? Let not the Musalmans and the Bhayats have the pretext of saying that you fought shy of the Chief Justice's decision."

"Why must I wait to take the right decision? It cannot await a moment's delay. I know the reference is mischievous and we must win. That might give greater value to the renunciation. But I am not renouncing the award in order that the world may acclaim the act. By no means. I am freeing myself from a terrible oppression. I have made my decision and am feeling free as a bird."

The workers felt that they were throwing away the hard-earned victory. In a talk, Gandhi said: "You ought to understand and appreciate the rejection of the award. It was wellnigh impossible for you to have, to use the legal language, that decree executed. I could have got it done, but at the cost of enormous labour and time and legal talent that I still possess. Meanwhile, your hands would have been rusting, your hands would have been crippled. You would have learnt nothing from the skill with which I should have been tackling the fresh hurdles that were being daily placed in my way. I have saved you from the burden of my sin. You are, at worst, 'as you were'. If you want foolishly to march to jail, you are now free. Only you must not look to me. I can carry you forward along my own lines. It may be that I am unfit to lead you. You can then discard me, and you have every right to do so. You may not tolerate a general who changes his tactics every now and then. But if you will have me, you must have me on my terms."

Gandhi's aged sister, ignorant and unlettered, was terribly disturbed over the decision which she took as a defeat. So, Kasturbai pleaded with him to console his aged sister.

"But," said Gandhi with a smile, "why would not you plead my case?"

"But how can I? I do not myself understand."

"But you must understand. You remember the time in South Africa when you were dying and the doctor said you would not live, unless you took chicken broth?"

"Oh yes, I remember."

"Well, if you do, don't you also remember that though I allowed you to do as you liked, you said you would prefer to die but you could not take chicken broth?"

"Yes."

"That was because you were firm in your faith in God. You knew that God would keep you if He so willed, but that you would not care to live by breaking your vow not to touch meat.

"Even so, I should have fasted until the Thakore Saheb and Durbar Virawala had come to me relenting and saying, 'Please break your fast. We are going to fulfil our promise.' Instead, I wavered. I thought I must seek the aid of the British Government, lest I should die. It was a sin. And, if I get the award by committing the sin, I must give up the fruit of sin."

"But the Thakore Saheb and Virawala are placing obstructions in the way. If they were not doing so, the award would work all right and there would be an end to all the trouble. They are so obstreperous."

"They are so, because of my initial blunder. I irritated them and I have no right to expect better treatment from them. It is not they who are putting the obstacles. It is God acting through them, who is putting the obstacles. It is God who has thus opened my eyes and shown me the way. The sooner I wash my hands of the sin, the better. Don't you think so?"

"Yes," Kasturbai said hesitatingly. "But what of the repressive ordinances, the fines, etc.? We have given up everything and they are still going on as usual."

"What does that matter? We have to do our duty, trusting them to do theirs. Why do you not see that because I failed in my duty and was impatient to reap the result of my fast or to break it soon that God has punished me thus? But I am not defeated. Tell sister there is no defeat in the confession of one's error. The confession itself is a victory."

There was another interesting discussion between Gandhi and a child. "The award," Gandhi explained "was a cobra. And when we have a cobra in the house how do we feel?"

"We are afraid," said the child.

"Well, then so long as the award was there, both Durbar Shri Virawala and I were afraid of it, and were trying to dodge it. But it would not be dodged. I have gently put it out of the house and we are both now free from fear."

"I see that it was necessary to discard the award, but what have we gained?"

"Is it a small gain to have been rid of a venomous cobra and thus rid of fear? It was a cobra in the house. We can now live in the house like a happy family. Durbar Shri Virawala and I not only sought to dodge the cobra, but we used to shun each other. We at least meet each other now as friends."

"But what is it worth? What is there in Durbar Shri Virawala to draw out?"

"What is there in you?" he asked. The child was struck dumb. "If there are any virtues in you, even so there are in Durbar Shri Virawala. If I hug you as my own child, why should I not hug Durbar Shri Virawala as a member of the family? I know you; I do not know Durbar Shri Virawala. But we have to be friends with him and make the best of the virtues that he surely has. As you have *atman* in you, even so has he. Indeed, there is no human being but has something valuable in him, some quality of *atman*, if we can but observingly distil it out."

"But what are we to do after the cobra is gone? With the cobra seems to have gone even the house—all that we had won."

"No, nothing else is gone. The notification is still there. And we are the wiser for the experience of the past three months. I had taken a wrong route, I have retraced my step. We thought that we could achieve much by hard swearing. We know that it had a contrary result. We have examined the quality of our ahimsa. It was poor. We had made enemies of our opponents. We have to win them by love, and the way is now clear for us. Our fight for freedom is not over. It cannot be over. But we are now free to carry it on in a better atmosphere and with cleaner weapons."

Two days after his decision to renounce the award, Gandhi attended the durbar by special invitation. There the Thakore Saheb announced the cancellation of all previous notifications, promised restoration of the confiscated property and fines, and declared that henceforth all the citizens of the state would enjoy their civil rights

and liberties within the bounds of the ordinary law. He announced a committee to report on constitutional reforms.

Some workers were angry with Gandhi for having attended the durbar. "Have I ever in my life been guilty of flattery?" Gandhi asked. "Have I ever resorted to flattery even in public interest? I declared years ago, that I would not sell truth and non-violence even for the freedom of my country, and I have repeated it many times since. Would he who said it resort to flattery? When Durbar Shri Virawala invited me to go to the palace, he even said that I had justified my claim to be as the father of the Thakore Saheb, that the latter would gladly come and see me, but that he would be happy if I went there. He added I need not attend the durbar which was to be held. But that he would ask the people to wait a while to see me, when I went there. I saw what he meant, but was determined to attend even the durbar if he had so desired. I would have attended it, even if he had told me that it was in celebration of the Thakore Saheb's victory and my defeat. I had offended him by having secured the award over his head, and I owed it to him to wipe out the offence by attending the function. It was a debt I owed, and I was in honour bound to repay it with interest. He might have asked for even an act of humiliation from me, and I might have done anything short of sacrificing my sense of self-respect or honour. But, he asked me to do nothing of the kind. The invitation was natural and polite. The durbar was held to announce the repeal of repressive legislations, etc., and the formation of the reforms committee. He who atones for sins never calculates; he pours out the whole essence of his contrite heart. I may tell you that my atonement is not yet over. I know that I am speaking in a language that is beyond you, but if you have had even a slight glimpse of true ahimsa, you should feel that all that I am doing now is the most natural thing for me.

"A non-violent fight is sharp as the edge of a sword, sharpened on the whetstone of heart. A straight fight in an equal battle takes some bravery; but braver is he who, knowing that he would have to sacrifice ninety-five as against the five of the enemy, faces death. That is why, we still extol the prowess of Pratap and Shivaji. But a satyagrahi risks all and offers of himself a willing and pure sacrifice. Without the will, the purity and sacrifice is nothing worth. I assure you that what I have done is what every true satyagrahi

ought to do. 'Whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.' "

Gandhi gave a series of talks to the workers. He explained:

"I have not yet known a general who has not altered time and again the plans of his campaign and made eleventh hour alterations in his orders. The ordinary soldier knows nothing of these plans. In fact, they are a closely guarded secret unknown to all but the general himself. That is why Tennyson wrote those immortal lines: 'Theirs not to reason why, theirs not to make reply, theirs but to do and die.' These words apply, if you please, to a satyagrahi army more appropriately than to the ordinary army. For, a military general may change his plans in view of the changing situation every day. The military strategy depends on the changing tactics of the enemy. The satyagrahi general has to obey his inner voice, for, over and above the situation outside, he examines himself constantly and listens to the dictates of the inner self. Both in satyagraha and military warfare, the position of the soldier is very nearly the same. He knows no rest, no certainty of movements; the only certainty for him is to face heavy odds and even death. His promise to be under discipline and to obey the general's command applies even during the period of suspension of hostilities. But I have never asked for this kind of discipline. I have always tried to carry conviction to my co-workers, to carry their hearts and reasons with me. I shall go on doing so always, but where you cannot follow, you will have to have faith. In our warfare, there is enough scope for reasoning, but there is a limit to it. You will go on arguing until you are convinced, but when no conviction comes you must fall back on faith."

With these words, he explained why there was no alternative for him but to reject the award. It was essentially a moral issue, but he had no difficulty in showing that it could not but have the best results. "There is now the way of negotiation open to you, but if you cannot think of it, it is open to you to fight. In fact, if I had not cast away the award, the fight would have been long delayed. I have saved you a few months. But you can overthrow my leadership and be free. From the point of view of satyagraha, there is nothing but good coming out of the decision. A general is none the worse for the realization of his weakness and for atoning of his sin. In fact, sin, ignorance, weakness are synonymous,

and in asking for the Viceroy's intervention and clinging to the award, I was guilty of all the three. When the general purifies himself, as I have done, far from weakening his army, he adds to its strength enormously."

In reply to the question, "What next?", Gandhi explained his programme to the Rajkot workers:

"This depends on individual workers cultivating non-violence in thought, word and deed, by means of a concentrated effort in the fulfilment of the fourfold constructive programme. Maximum of work and minimum of speech must be the motto. In the centre of the programme is the spinning wheel—no haphazard programme of spinning but scientific understanding of every detail, including the mechanics and the mathematics of it, study of cotton and its varieties, and so on. There is the programme of literacy. You must concentrate exclusively on it, and not talk of any other thing. The work should be systematic and according to time-table. Do not talk of politics—not even of non-violence—but talk to them of the advantages of literacy. There is prohibition of drink and intoxicating drugs and of gambling. There is medical relief by means of the propagation of the simple rules of hygiene and sanitation and elementary preventive measures, and of the cheap home remedies and training intelligent village folk in these.

"There should not be one house in Rajkot with which you have not established contact from the point of view of pure service. You have to cultivate the Muslims, serve them unselfishly. There are Harijans. Establish living contact with them.

"All this constructive work should be for its own sake. And be sure that this will develop the quality required for non-violent responsible government. And that is how I began my work in South Africa. I began with serving the people and I did not know that I was training them for civil disobedience. I did not know myself that I was so training myself. But you all know what happened in the end.

"This constructive programme may go on endlessly. But why should you be tired of it? Do you know the Hundred Years' War in England? If they fought for a hundred years, we should be prepared to fight for a thousand years, inasmuch as we are a continent. That we will have given our contribution to the fight for freedom will be our reward.

"That is the mass constructive programme I want you to do, and that is the basis of training for the non-violence of the brave. It is whole and indivisible, and those who do not believe in it must leave me and work according to their own lights."

This programme was evolved by Gandhi according to his own reading of the situation in the states. If the situation was different, if the people were to a man ready to offer the utmost they could? "Then I would say to them be reduced to ashes. But that will be on one condition, namely, that you have reached the state of non-violence of my description. If I have that assurance, I would say that though it is unequal battle, you may fight single-handed in spite of opposition from the paramount power and the states. I would be the last person to cool the zeal and ardour of the people."

But would it not suffice, if the workers were pledged to carry out the programme and carried it out faithfully? "Hardly," said Gandhi. "For, you have to give a visible demonstration of the fact that the whole of the state obeys your discipline. You want responsible government for all, not merely for the workers."

While in Rajkot, Gandhi never discussed all-India politics. But the release of the correspondence between him and Subhas Bose in mid-May enabled Mr. Steel of *New York Times* to draw him out. The letters described how the Congress was divided on the fundamental issues of policy and how personalities widened the gulf between the Gandhi group and the Forward Bloc under the leadership of Bose. Gandhi invited Bose to agree to differ, and meet on social, moral and municipal platforms, as the same political platform could not accommodate them; that had been demonstrated by what had happened before and after Tripuri. Bose wanted a reversal of policy under Gandhi's leadership; he wanted to force the issue in the form of an ultimatum to the British Government.

"What is your idea of independence?" was the first question Mr. Steel put to Gandhi. "By independence I mean the complete withdrawal of British power from India," replied Gandhi. "It does not exclude partnership between the two nations enjoying equal independent status and terminable by either at will." "It need not be different from dominion status," he continued in reply to another query. "But perhaps dominion status will not be a happy term to use for a continent like India which is ethnologically and politically different from other dominions like South Africa, Canada,

Australia, etc. But perhaps this term is as elastic as the English constitution. If dominion status could be so defined as to cover a case like India and if India could come to an honourable agreement with England, I would not quarrel about words. If British statesmen feel it convenient to use the word dominion status about India rather than any other, in order to describe that honourable agreement, I will not quarrel."

"But," rejoined Mr. Steel, "there are elements in the Congress like Subhas Bose and his group who want absolute independence outside the British Empire."

"It is only a question of terminology," replied Gandhi. "I will not admit any difference between Subhas Babu and myself on this point, though we may use different language. Supposing such free and equal partnership, as I have postulated, were feasible, Subhas Babu won't say 'no' to it. But today, if such a proposition were put to him, he will probably say, as he may, it is ruled out for him. For, he would say, the British are not likely to yield so easily as some might think. If he talks to me like that, I won't combat him, but would say that I prefer to use the language that I use as being more suited to my temperament and my faith in the essential identity of human nature."

The journalist next wanted to know, if there were negotiations going on between him and the Government, in connection with the federation. "None whatsoever," said Gandhi. "All suggestions to this effect that one sees in the press are more figments of imagination. The present Viceroy is not made that way. He does not believe in doing things secretly. He puts all his cards on the table and likes taking the public into his confidence. At any rate, that is my impression. I think he does believe that no cause is damaged by open negotiation.

"But I feel certain that the federation will not come, whilst it is not acceptable to the Congress or the Muslims or the princes. I am inclined to think that British statesmen will not impose federation upon an unwilling and dissatisfied India, but will try to placate all parties. That, at any rate, is my hope.

"It would be a first-class tragedy, if it is imposed upon India. The federal structure cannot be brought into being in the midst of sullenness and opposition."

This provoked the question, "What is the alternative?"

"The alternative may be to offer something that would be acceptable to all or either of the three parties."

Mr. Steel: "But you do not believe with Subhas Bose that the best alternative would be to issue an ultimatum?"

Gandhi: "That is the fundamental difference between Subhas Babu and myself. Not that the ultimatum is in itself wrong, but it has to be backed by an effective sanction and there are today no non-violent sanctions. If all the parties come to an honourable understanding, an effective sanction could be easily forged."

Referring to the communal situation, Mr. Steel asked whether the Hindu-Muslim situation was getting worse.

"Apparently yes, perhaps," said Gandhi. "But I have every hope that ultimately we are bound to come together. The interests that are common to us and that bind us together are so tremendous that the leaders of both the sections must come to terms. Force of circumstances will compel them to do so. That we appear to be farthest apart from one another today is a natural outcome of the awakening that has taken place. It has emphasized the points of differences and accentuated the prejudices, mutual suspicions and jealousies. Fresh demands that are coming into being every day with the new leadership have made confusion worse confounded. But I hope that out of chaos, order is going to emerge."

Mr. Steel: "Are not the differences between the Muslim League and the Congress unbridgeable?"

Gandhi: "The differences are unsubstantial."

Returning to the question of the ultimatum, Mr. Steel again put the question: "You think the time is not ripe for an ultimatum; what then should the next move be?"

"To put our own house in order," said Gandhi. "Immediately we have done that and brought the various elements together, we should be ready."

On the eve of his departure, on May 31, Gandhi addressed the executive committee of the Kathiawad Political Conference:

"It is growing upon me every day that we shall have to lower our key, our demand for full responsible government will have to remain in abeyance for some time. Not that we are not entitled to it, but it is clear to me that we have not the will for it, we are not ready to pay the price. There is an awakening, but it is not the awakening for active non-violence of the brave. Not that I have

suddenly realized this. The realization was there, the will to face the conclusion was not there, and I am reaping the fruit of that weakness. I have been weak-willed ever since Bardoli onwards, but my co-workers deluded themselves into the belief that we had attained the requisite non-violence and I shared their delusion.

"I do not repent of this. It is likely that if we had acted otherwise, there would not have been the awakening we see today. But that seems to lead one to a rather dreadful conclusion, namely, that compromise with non-violence was necessary for this widespread awakening. But that is not the conclusion. The conclusion is that God chooses as his instruments the humblest and weakest of His creatures to fulfil Himself.

"Today with this realization, I would not lead another Dandi march. The breach of the salt laws was a perfect proposition, but violence of the mind had crept in almost from the beginning. All that we had learnt then was that it was expedient to refrain from the use of physical violence. This was the non-violence of the calculating *bania*, not of the brave Kshatriya. This non-violence of the calculating *bania* has not, could not have, carried us far. It could not possibly avail to win and retain swaraj, to win over our opponent who believed in the use of arms.

"Today I sense violence everywhere, smell it inside and outside the Congress ranks. In 1921, even the goonda element outside the Congress was more or less under our control. Perfect non-violence is difficult. It admits no weakness. It made me take the false step of approaching the Viceroy, in order to end my fast. And it was unpardonable on the part of a general who claims to derive his whole strength from God. But God gave me courage to retrieve the blunder, and we are all the stronger and purer for it.

"I am not tired of repeating again and again that we should be non-violent in thought and word and deed. We had been saying so, but there was no emphasis on the first of these. A dissolute character is more dissolute in thought than in deed, and the same is true of violence. Our violence in word and deed is but a feeble echo of the surging violence of thought in us.

"Are you prepared to go with me so far? Does all that I say to you carry conviction? And if so, violence should be eschewed from the innermost of our thoughts. But if you cannot go with me, do go your own way. If you can reach your goal in any other way, do

so by all means. You will deserve my congratulations. For, I cannot in any case stand cowardice. Let no one say when I am gone that I taught the people to be cowards. If you think my ahimsa amounts to that or leads you to that, you should reject it without any hesitation. I would far rather that you died bravely dealing a blow and receiving a blow than died in abject terror. If ahimsa of my dream is impossible, you can reject the creed rather than carry on the pretence of non-violence.

"Fleeing from battle is cowardice and unworthy of a warrior. An armed fighter is known to have sought fresh arms as soon as he loses those in his possession and they lose their efficacy. He leaves the battle to get them. A non-violent warrior knows no leaving the battle. He rushes into the mouth of *himsa*, never even once harbouring an evil thought. If this ahimsa seems to you to be impossible, let us be honest with ourselves and say so, and give it up.

"For me, there is no laying down arms. I can't do so. I am trying to be the warrior of my description and, if God wills, I may be that during this life. Such a warrior can fight single-handed."

"And let me give a bit of my own experience in South Africa," he continued. "When thousands joined the movement, I had not spoken to them, not even seen them. Papers they could not read. But my heart was working in unison with them. Living faith is all that is necessary. It is evident that I have not the capacity today to inspire faith in the millions. This needs superior living faith in non-violence and in God. This faith is self-acting and illumines man's life more and more every day. In the pursuit of an earnest research, I may seem to act strangely. I should not grumble, if everyone left me in the honesty of his conviction. Let no one stick to me in the blind faith that something will happen. Such will hinder rather than help the cause."

New Technique

1939

DURING his short stay in Bombay, Gandhi had to face opposition of the anti-prohibitionists. In his appeal to the Parsis, he wrote on May 30, 1939:

"Parsi friends continue to favour me with their letters, some of which do not err on the side of politeness. Some are affectionate and so simple, that they believe me to be capable of performing wonders. And among these writers, there is one who writes with a lacerated heart and sends me cuttings which contain palpable falsehoods. He asks me to appeal to the Parsis with a view, at least, of purging the opposition of indecency. The language used in the cuttings is not translatable. Families of those who have incurred their ill will have not been left alone. Vulgarity is too mild a term for characterizing some of the writings. One writer uses language of violence, which certainly brings him within penal laws. But the writers have no fear of the law. The writings before me are a fair sample of civil liberty. I call these writings terrorism of minorities. One writer has given the prohibition campaign a communal turn and has not hesitated to say that Congress Hindus have plotted to ruin the Parsis!!!

"Surely abuse is no argument. Let the Parsis who are interested in opposing prohibition, carry on whatever agitation they like. But let it be decent, non-violent and within bounds.

"Must one hundred thousand Parsis hold up an overdue reform which promises to bring a ray of hope in the dungeons of labouring population which far outnumbers the whole of the Parsi population? Every legitimate ground of complaint has been removed by Dr. Gilder. No Parsi, whose health requires the use of spirituous liquors, will be deprived of them. If Parsi religious rites really demand the use of the fiery liquid, they shall be supplied. Then there is the economic question. Many poor liquor dealers will be

hard hit by the deprivation of their means of livelihood. I understand that the ministers are taxing themselves to devise legitimate methods of dealing with them. But it will surely be very difficult, if not impossible, for them to do anything, if the wild ferment is kept up and terrorism, short of physical violence, is applied. Not that the ministers should not do justice because of terrorism, but it incapacitates them from taking effective action. For instance, it is necessary for the heads of the Parsi panchayat to confer with the ministers and, in consultation with them, think out a plan whereby prohibition in Bombay can be inaugurated with the least possible hardship. This can be done only if all parties recognize that prohibition has come to stay.

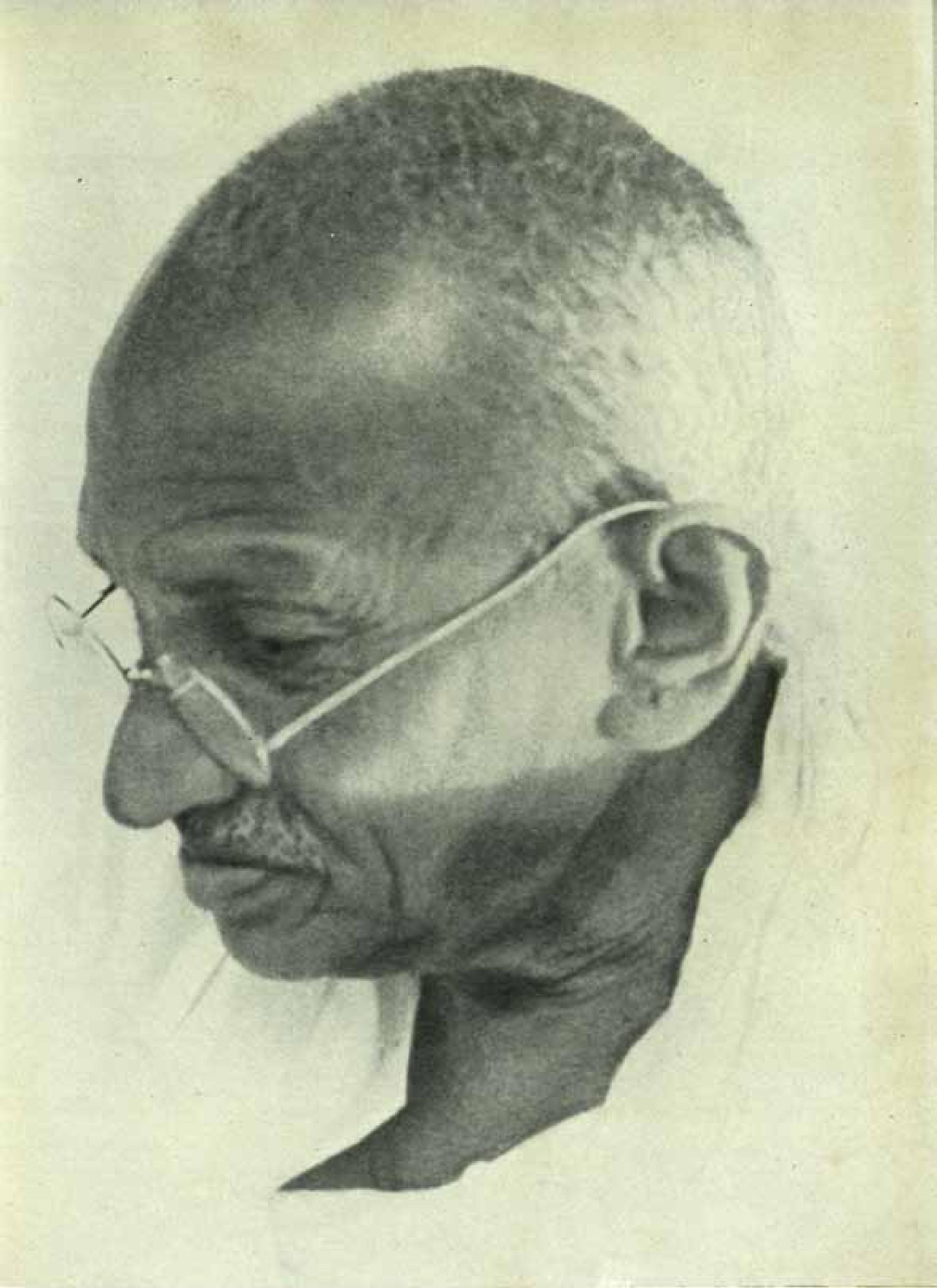
"My correspondents have asked me to use my influence with the ministers for withdrawing their measure. They should know that I have my own limitations. If I have any influence, it is due to my never crossing the boundary line. Having withdrawn from the Congress, it would ill become me to interfere with their work. The very purpose of my withdrawal would be defeated. What is more, I am most interested in prohibition. No one in India perhaps knows its beneficial effect as well as I do and, therefore, no one feels its necessity as keenly as I do. I have seen with my eyes people, otherwise sane, lying in gutters. Having identified myself with labour, I know what ruin, drink has brought to the homes of labourers given to drink. I know that they will not touch liquor, if it was not within reach. We have contemporaneous evidence that drinkers themselves are in many cases asking for prohibition. Have I not my eldest son, who was intelligent, brave, patriotic, and capable of sacrifice, and who has been ruined by the drink habit and who is today lost to his parents and lost to society and exists on the misplaced charity of generous donors? This is not an exception. It is a typical case, as I can say from a knowledge of the sons of persons in the so-called higher walks of life. As I write these lines, illustrations of unimpeachable authenticity crowd on my memory. I can, therefore, ask Parsi correspondents and others like them in return to help the ministers in their noble, philanthropic mission; for, I feel convinced that whatever may be said for or against the Congress ministers about their popular measures, their prohibition programme, if they are able to put it through to the end, will go down to posterity as unquestionably the noblest

measure of all. It is no vote-catching device. Prohibition is an integral part of the programme of national self-purification. Twice has it been demonstrated what was possible in the shape of closing of liquor shops even through voluntary effort. Let the great Parsi community, men and women, discarding the unbecoming vituperation, rise to the occasion and help the great reform movement which, if it succeeds, will not only enrich India morally and materially, but will serve as an impetus to similar effort in the western world. Many eyes outside India are now watching this experiment anxiously and prayerfully."

When Gandhi arrived in Bombay from Rajkot, a deputation consisting of the representatives of toddy, country liquor and foreign liquor dealers waited on him on June 3. Their representation addressed itself mainly to the hardships and the sufferings that would be the result of several thousand Parsi families being thrown out of employment; their being reduced to poverty and even bankruptcy; illicit sales and clandestine breaches of the law; impossibility of disposing of fifty to sixty lakhs of rupees worth of material by August 1; the loss on having to dispose of costly furniture.

Gandhi congratulated them on the restrained language of their representation. They had every right to go to him, as he was much attached to the Parsis. "What I gather from your representation is that far from being opposed in principle to prohibition, you have pointed out the difficulties and hardships involved. But I am afraid you have come to the wrong man. I never interfere with the work of the ministries. I confess I have not studied the economic aspect of the question. With me, it is a creed and I would, if I could, fulfil it at any cost. If I had the administration in my own hands, I should study all the figures you have given. I am sure the ministers have studied them, and you should approach them. They would gladly discuss the whole question with you and try to show the way out of the difficulties you have pointed out."

They also raised the question of short notice. The election manifesto of the Congress, they said, did not contain this programme, and the decision to introduce it in August had come upon them as a bolt from the blue. Gandhi replied: "The Congress election manifesto is principally a political document and naturally it does not contain the prohibition programme. But prohibition has been in the forefront of the Congress programme since 1920. With me



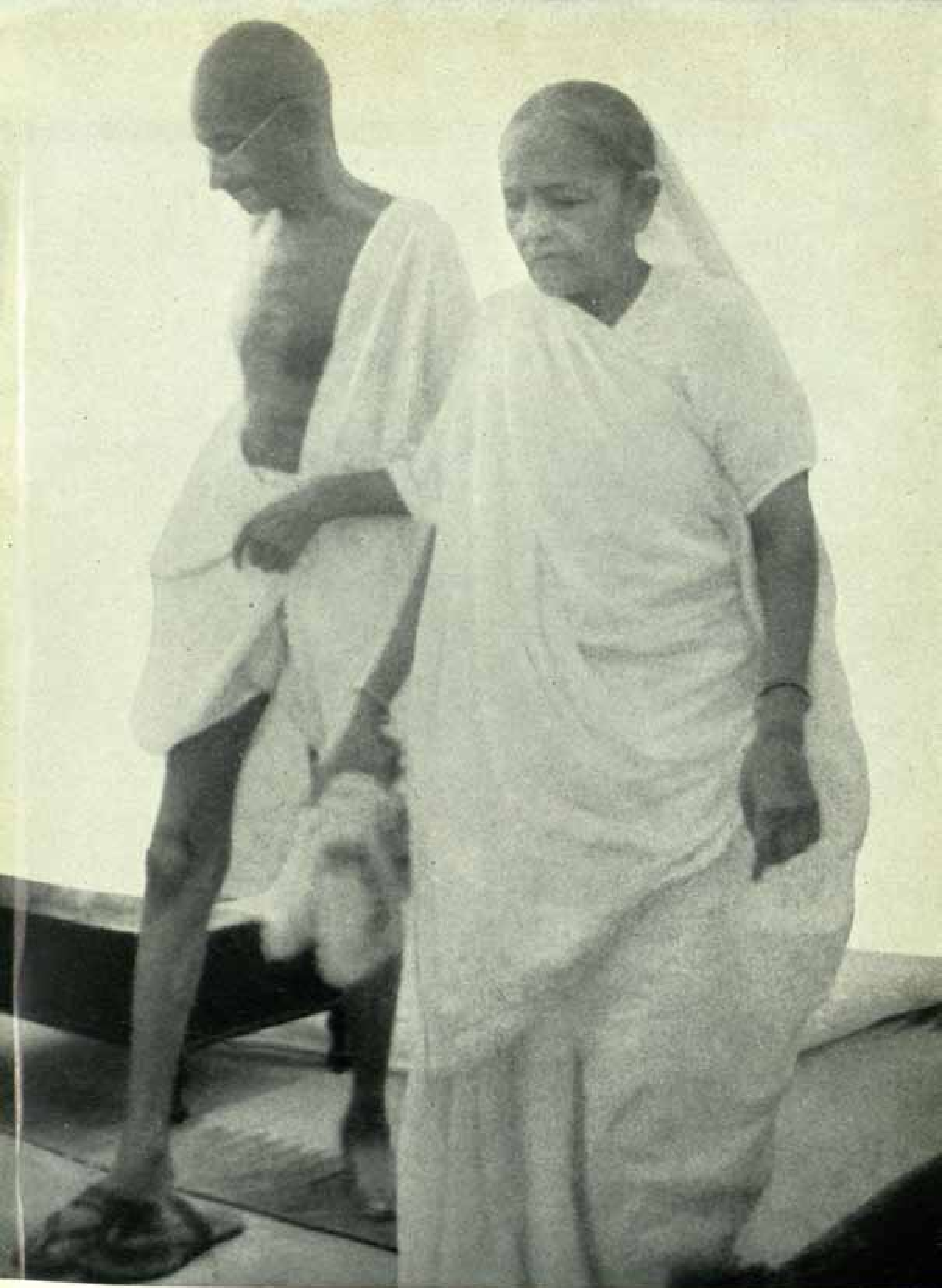
Photograph : Kanu Gandhi

Gandhi, Calcutta, May 1939



Photograph : Kanu Gandhi

Kasturbai applying ghee to Gandhi's feet, Segaon, 1939



From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Gandhi and Kasturbai, 1939

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Courtesy : Jivanji D. Desai

Gandhi's letter to the secretary of Navajivan Trust regarding the printing of his Gujarati autobiography in Devanagari script, dated Segaon, June 31, 1939



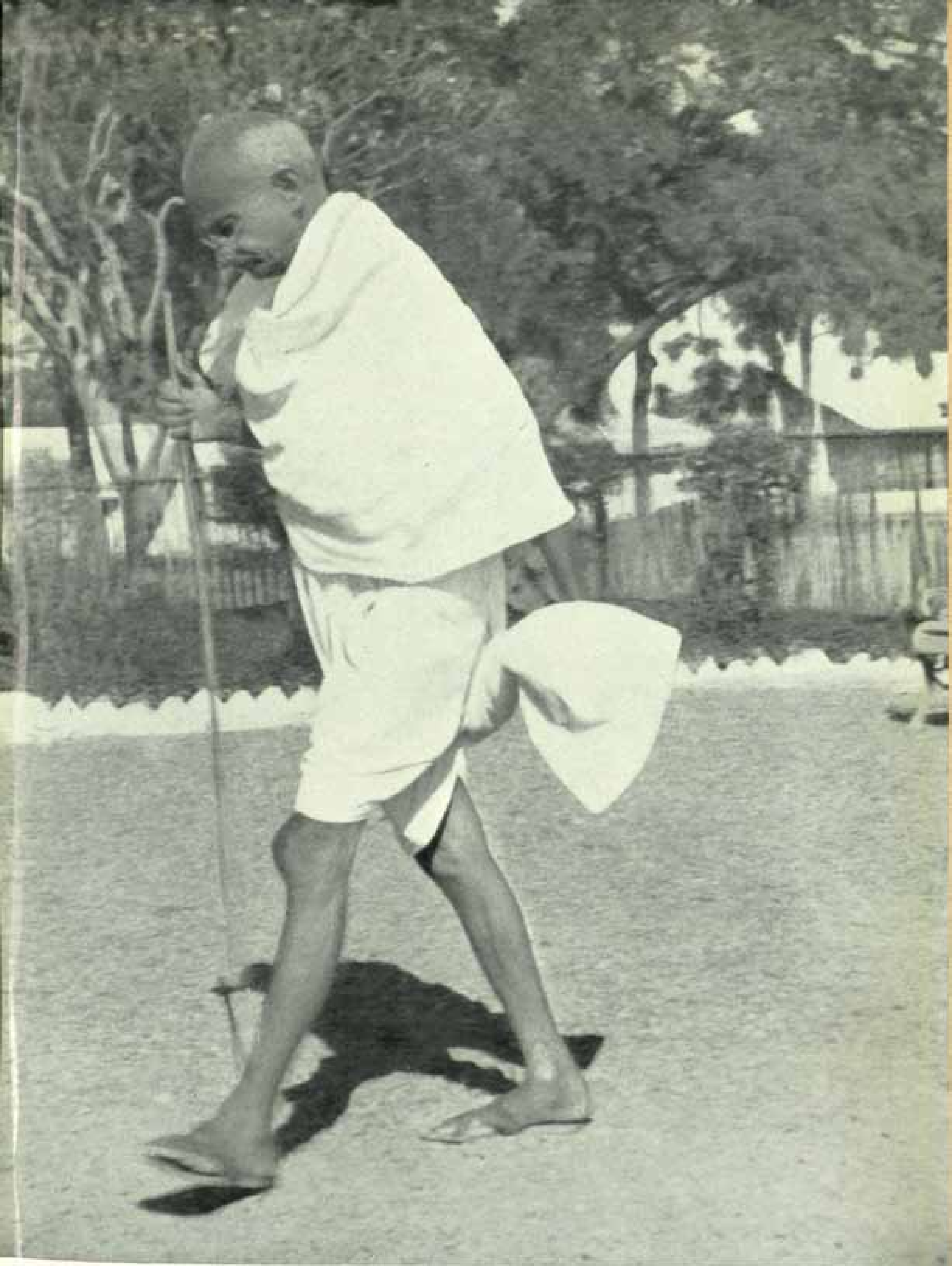
Courtesy : S. N. D. T. University

Gandhi at the convocation of the Thackersey University for Women, Bombay, July 1, 1939

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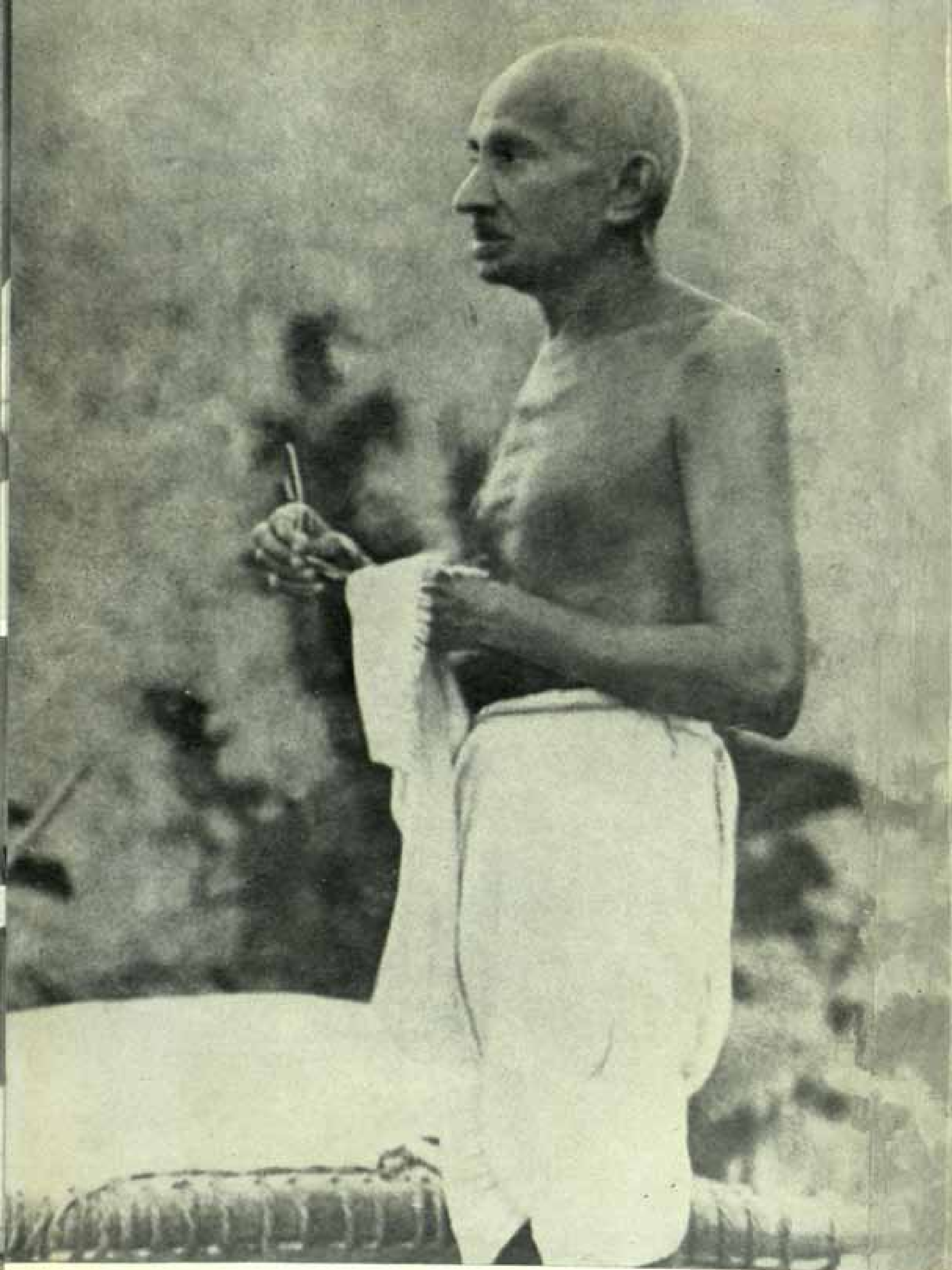
With the members of the Working Committee, Wardha, August 1939

A barber extracting thorn from Gandhi's foot, Wardha, August 1939



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On the way to a meeting of the Working Committee, Wardha, August 1939



Photograph: Udit Gopal

Gandhi cleaning his spectacles, Wardha, 1939

it has been a passion ever since my close contact with the Indian immigrants in South Africa and also with the South Africans. For I have seen with my own eyes the terrible scourge drink can be. It has ruined people morally, physically, economically, and it has destroyed the sanctity and happiness of the home. My heart bleeds as I think of the disaster that comes in its wake and I have pined for the immediate introduction of prohibition. When the Congress decided to accept offices, I thought it had the golden opportunity to introduce it at once, but it was the ministers who pleaded for fixing the time-limit at three years. To my mind, therefore, there is no question of short notice. It is coming several years too late. Hundreds and thousands of women have in the past picketed the liquor shops, suffered insults and assaults. There was no compulsion. It was all peaceful persuasion, and it had succeeded so remarkably that in some provinces, the excise revenue was almost reduced to zero. As for its effects in India, I would like you to study the condition of workmen in factories, and I would like to tell you also the boon prohibition has been to them in Ahmedabad."

One of the gentlemen in the deputation said that twelve to fifteen thousand tappers would be adversely affected and that fresh toddy had great medicinal value. "It is *nira* you are referring to," said Gandhi. "For, I agree it is a refreshing drink, and we make *gur* out of it. I would invite you to sample some of it." With this he offered them a plate of palm-juice and date-palm-juice *gur*. "If the tappers took to tapping the juice for *gur*-making, there was no question of their unemployment. In Bengal, tons of *gur* was prepared from *nira*, and in South India arrack was prepared from *gur* made out of fresh juice." But they maintained that it was impossible to draw fresh *nira* from a tree more than ten times during a season and that *gur* was not a feasible proposition. Gandhi said that the evidence in his possession was to the contrary. He would, however, inquire.

The other deputation was headed by Sir Cowasji Jehangir and its other members were Sir J. C. Coyajee, Sir H. P. Modi, Messrs. Khareghat, A. D. Shroff and Saklatwala. The gravamen of their charge was that the policy of prohibition was tantamount to coercion, as the community had for centuries indulged in drink without being any the worse for it. There was the argument of dislocation of trade and financial and economic structure of the province, of

the hardships it would cause to the traders and tappers, and the interference with the religious rites of the people. They said they also resented the distinction between Asiatics and non-Asiatics, and even suggested that not only the Parsis but Muslims and Hindus were also opposed to the policy.

"Drunkenness is bad, not drink," said Sir Cowasji. "And for the sake of a few who drink, why penalize the whole community? I take two or three glasses of sherry every day and I know hundreds of others who talk of prohibition but who do drink and will do so in spite of prohibition." Mr. Khareghat, a veteran temperance reformer, entered a curious plea: "I don't drink, nor am I a dealer in drinks. But this prohibition policy will ruin thousands, and I want you to realize your error and do as you did in Rajkot. I would then honour you with all my heart." And he added, "According to our religion, it is the duty of the host to offer the guest good bread and good wine."

Then followed Mr. Saklatwala. "I do not drink," he said, "and thank God I have enough property to enable me to pay property tax. But why should others regulate my life? I tell you, although I do not drink, if someone came and told me I might not drink, he would make my blood boil." "But," rejoined Gandhi smiling, "even so you do not steal, and yet there is law against thieving. Would you, therefore, steal to defy the law?"

Sir H. P. Modi summed up the case: "We do not believe in prohibition. Why do you tempt us to break the law? We want to be exempted. Drink has become part of our social habit, our daily life, and we want to drink."

Gandhi replied: "As I told the deputation that preceded you, you have come to the wrong man. There is a wide gulf between you and me. It was Dadabhai who taught me prohibition, and the distinction between prohibition and temperance. Individual liberty is allowed to man only to a certain extent. He cannot forget that he is a social being, and that his individual liberty has to be curtailed at every step. I would appeal to you to consider one thing. What is your population? One lakh at the most in a population of thirty-five crores. You have become famous in the world not as residents of Persia, but as Indians. I want you to consider not in terms of one lakh but in terms of India, not the narrow interest of your community, but of the larger interest of whole country. How

can you interrupt and ruin a noble experiment? You say that you cannot get rid of this, so very much you are wedded to it! You are not fair to yourselves there. You have given up so many things. You gave up your own language and adopted Gujarati, you changed your dress, and you changed many of your manners and customs. Why must you then stick to this one infirmity? You may plead your weakness, but for Heaven's sake, do not advance the plea of individual liberty. There you have given away the whole case. You have sacrificed much for India, sacrifice this bad habit too. I have seen men and women wallowing in gutters in South Africa and families ruined."

Sir H. P. Modi interrupted saying: "Where do you see the ruin in India?"

"I tell you I have seen it with my own eyes. There is the tragic case of my own son. Sixty thousand workers in Ahmedabad are blessing the prohibitionist. I claim that the moral conscience of the public is with me. The issue between us is the narrowest possible. Do you want to press the question of a few individual consciences to the extent of ruining a whole country?"

"Are there not other evils? There is gambling, for instance."

"None so disastrous as this, and this breeds the rest. But I am for the abolition of gambling too. This evil, however, ruins the victim, body and soul."

"The same thing would happen, if you were to overeat! You are talking of the 60,000 mill-hands in Ahmedabad. Why not then listen to the appeal of 50,000 Parsis of Bombay? Drunkenness is unknown amongst us."

"Let us assume that for a moment. It proves that you are temperate. Well, why will you not carry your temperateness a little further and co-operate in this the greatest of all the moral reforms in India? And remember, there is ample provision for those who need drink for their health or religious rites. I suggest your working along these lines, but not seeking to ruin the reform."

"But why draw the line between Europeans and Indians?"

Gandhi promptly retorted: "Call it my weakness, and agitate for including the Europeans too in the prohibition. The Europeans will, like us, profit by being included in the general law. And their health will not suffer, for they will have all the drink they may need for their health."

Under the "Meaning of Prohibition", Gandhi wrote:

"His Grace the Archbishop of Bombay has been kind enough to send me a letter and also a copy of his address to the Rotary Club against prohibition. I have read both with the respect and attention their author deserves.

"My study of His Grace's letter and address at once revealed a serious flaw, for which I must be held primarily responsible. The word prohibition is a misnomer for what the Bombay Government and the other provincial governments, where the Congress controls the ministries, are now doing regarding the liquor trade. What the governments are in reality doing is not prohibiting drink, but they are closing the liquor shops which are absolutely under government control. The shop-owners have no statutory protection save what they get from year to year. Every owner of a liquor shop knows that his licence may not be renewed next year. He may be even outbidden, if he possesses a country liquor or a toddy licence, as these are auctioned every year. Therefore, licensees have no vested interest in their licences beyond the year for which they are held and then too subject to the observance of the stringent conditions laid down for them. Therefore, I claim that the law for the abolition of liquor licences 'is an ordinance of reason for the common good made and promulgated for the community by the competent authority.' All that the state is doing is to remove from the drinker the temptation or the facility which the state considers is harmful to him except for medicinal purposes.

"The Archbishop says, 'To win the allegiance of body, of mind and of heart, needed by any law. . . that law must be just,' that is to say, 'the conscience of millions must say this is just.' I have no difficulty in endorsing the proposition. Viewed in the manner indicated by me, the state does not need to carry with it the conscience of millions. But I hold that India is the one place in the world where the conscience of millions would justify the law of abolition of the state trade in intoxicating liquors and drugs. There is no need to take any referendum. It consists in the overwhelming number of legislators approving of the law. Let me remind His Grace of the past history of this great reform movement. It began with G. O. M. Dadabhai Naoroji. In 1920, it became an integral part of the Congress constructive programme. In the absence of political power, the Congress arranged an elaborate programme of

picketing liquor and opium shops. In this programme, thousands of men and women took part all over India. All the communities, including Parsis, took part in the picketing programme. Attempts were made, even in the days of non-co-operation, to induce the authorities to undertake the abolition legislation. Without exception, they pleaded financial inability, never the impropriety of so-called interference with the right of the people to be supplied with liquor by the state. One minister told me that if I would help him to raise the revenue needed to make up for the loss caused by the drop in the drink revenue, he would introduce prohibition at once. It is an open secret that the reform has been delayed, simply for the sake of revenue. In other words, people have been tempted to drink for the sake of raising the revenue. The black history of the opium trade bears out the truth of this statement.

"Those who speak in the name of individual freedom, do not know their India. There is as much right of a person to demand drinking facilities from the state, as there is to demand facilities for the supply of public women for the satisfaction of his animal passion. I hope that those who pride themselves of their moderation in drinking will not feel hurt by the illustration I have taken. In this country, we are not used to legislation for the regulation of vice. But in countries like Germany, the houses of women who sell their virtue are licensed. I do not know what will be more resented in those countries, the stopping of the licences for the houses of ill fame or the houses of drink. When woman realizes her dignity, she will refuse to sell her virtue and those members of the sex, who are jealous of its honour, will move heaven and earth to have legalized prostitution abolished. Will it be then contended that such abolition will go hard with prostitutes and their dependants whose only means of livelihood depended upon this calling?

"I plead that social workers cannot work effectively, so long as licensed liquor dens continue to lure the drinkers to enter them. It is curious that in all India any opposition to prohibition comes from the Parsis. They pride themselves on their temperance and resent what they call an encroachment upon their personal liberty. They also make it a grievance that the Europeans have been given facilities, thus constituting a bar sinister against the Asiatics. I have already pleaded with the Parsis that they should rise superior to their habit and allow the great reform to proceed with their active

co-operation. As to the alleged bar sinister, let me point out that a bar sinister is imposed from without. In the case in point, we the Asiatics voluntarily recognize the limitations of the Europeans. But, even they have to secure exemption and submit to the regulations. The proper course for the Parsi friends would be to agitate, if they wish, for the removal of the discrimination, not use it for securing similar exemption for themselves.

"His Grace has further argued that if the price to be paid for removing the temptation of drink from the drunkard is out of all proportion to the good attempted, the reform is harmful. The proposition is well stated, but it is a matter of opinion whether the price to be paid is out of all proportion to the good attempted. I have endeavoured to show that the whole of the excise policy has been not to supply any felt want, but to increase the revenue. I would invite the Archbishop to study the history of the excise administration. He will find that all the advanced legislators have condemned the policy in unmeasured terms. The price that is being paid for the attempted reform is insignificant, if the history is borne in mind. And even the insignificant will not have to be paid, if the Archbishop and the influential Parsi friends will lead an agitation for the reduction in the wholly indefensible army expenditure and free the money thus saved for the purpose of bringing about all-India abolition of the liquor traffic. It is an overdue reform. They should congratulate the Bombay ministers on their courage in levying a tax which was the easiest to be borne. But I have no doubt that they will gladly remit the tax, if they are helped by the Central Government. Only they could not delay the reform, whilst they were fighting the Central Government single-handed. Let all the parties recognize the necessity of the reform and demand justice from the Central Government and the hardship referred to by the Archbishop will be reduced almost to a nullity.

"There is one curious question asked of Dr. Gilder. To do the Archbishop justice, I must copy the question in his own words: 'Does he admit that there are several kinds of intoxication which have nothing at all to do with drink? Drunkenness paralyses the reason and wrecks homes. But the intoxication of false ideals is now wrecking whole nations and the world itself. Moreover, does Dr. Gilder admit that such intoxication is highly infectious? He will hardly deny it, knowing as he does the recent history of the

nations. Then will he tell us, "Is India necessarily immune from the infection of false ideals which intoxicate?" '

"It suggests that the exercise by the state of the undoubted discretion to stop the issue of drink shop licences is a false ideal which intoxicates and which has infected Dr. Gilder. Of course, everything is possible in this world. But I venture to suggest that this abolition being a half-century-old national cry is not likely to be a false, intoxicating, infectious ideal. An ideal that is false and intoxicating and highly infectious, must in its nature be temporary.

"The last paragraph of the address is a question addressed to me. The half dozen lines are packed with suggestions which hardly answer known facts. Thus His Grace suggests, among other things: 'Prohibition tends to be regarded by its advocates not as one possible course, but as the only possible religion.' Nobody has called it a religion. After having stated the proposition, His Grace ends thus: 'The author of the creed of truth and non-violence will not resent this last question: Is he still quite certain that all religions are true?' In any other mouth, I would consider this question to be unpardonable. But I do not expect a busy administrator like the Archbishop of Bombay to study all a man like me may say or to verify his quotations. His question to tally with what I have said should have been: 'Is he still quite certain that all the known great religions of the earth are equally true?' My answer to this revised question would be: 'Emphatically yes.' Only the revised question is obviously irrelevant to the Archbishop's thesis.

"His Grace has propounded a conundrum in his letter, which now hardly needs a separate answer. So far as I know, ministers have no qualms of conscience. They are robbing no one. All trade is precarious. Liquor trade is doubly so everywhere. The Bombay Government are straining every nerve to see that poor traders do not suffer avoidable hardships.

"There is one sentence in the letter which makes me pause: 'The last few months have convinced me that the cause of charity in Bombay is threatened with a shattering blow.' All the beliefs of the Archbishop have been based, as I think I have shown, on unproved assumptions. I should want proof for this unqualified assertion. If the cause of charity is threatened as stated, I would request him to produce the proof before the ministers, and I doubt not that they will soon set the thing right.

"The Archbishop's last paragraph in his letter is worthy of his high office. Only his offer appears to be conditional. Let him and his assistants and disciples unconditionally become total abstainers and help the noble cause of temperance. They will lighten the task of the lawgiver and help to make of the abolition of the liquor traffic the success that it deserves to be in this land where the public conscience, the conscience of the dumb millions, is undoubtedly in favour of the abolition."

The controversy with the anti-prohibitionists over, Gandhi had talks with the Travancore workers' deputation. On June 4, he explained his new technique regarding the states:

"My rich experiences in Rajkot show me that civil disobedience in Travancore was suspended at the right time. The Rajkot recantation teaches me that it is not enough to have withdrawn the charges against Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar. But it is necessary to recognize that the Travancoreans have not only to reckon with the maharaja but also with the dewan. I also observe that several Travancorean critics have asserted that the suspension has led to greater repression. These critics do not know that the suspension was not advised in order to avoid repression, not even in expectation of its being stopped. It was advised in order to avoid popular violence, no matter how caused or by whom instigated, if it was instigated. It was also advised in order to avoid the brutalization of human nature. These two objects may be said to have attained in a fair measure. It was also advised in order to pave the way for an honourable understanding with the authorities and to educate people in the true way of ahimsa. These objects have still to be worked for. Here my new light, which I seem to see dimly, enables me to tender advice which, but for the light, I would perhaps not have been able to give with as much confidence as now.

"I am convinced that direct negotiations should be opened with the authorities. Hitherto, the State Congress people have talked at the authorities and the latter at them. The result has been a widening of the gulf between them. It would not do for a satyagrahi to argue that the approach must be mutual. That assumes existence of the spirit of satyagraha in the authorities, whereas satyagraha is offered in respect of those who make no claim to be satyagrahis. Hence the first and the last work of a satyagrahi is always to seek an opportunity for an honourable approach. Now

this is impossible, so long as the heart is steeled against a belief even in the possibility, let alone advisability, of such approach. And hitherto the impossibility has been unquestionably assumed. I have been a tacit party to it. I know better. If the leaders have active ahimsa in them, they must cultivate a belief in the perfect possibility and necessity of such approach. And if they have that belief, the way will surely be open to them. In my own person, it is well known, I have always acted on that principle.

"In making such approach, it would be necessary to lower the key of our note. Our aim must remain what it is, but we must be prepared to negotiate for less than the whole, so long as, it is unmistakably of the same kind and has in it the inherent possibility of expansion. I have found that nowhere, with the only exception of Aundh, are the princes ready to part with all the power in favour of the people. Nor is the paramount power anxious for the people in the states to receive full responsible government. . . But what is most important of all, the states people themselves, as a mass, are nowhere prepared to pay the price. There is no mistaking the awakening that has taken place in the states. But it is not enough for the great purpose to be attained. It will be well to recognize this fact. In aiming beyond our capacity, we are likely to lose all. I would give much to have in all the states a reign of law instead of reign of a person or persons, however well-meaning they may be. I can then see my way to build up responsible government on that solid foundation. But responsible government, which is only a gift without the will and the power of the people behind it, will be a mere paper responsibility, hardly worth the paper on which it may be printed.

"The second object of suspension is closely related to the foregoing. If it is a fact that the atmosphere for immediate responsible government among the states is not propitious and that the people are not ready to pay the price, it follows that they should have the proper training for it. I am not likely, in the near future, to advise mass satyagraha anywhere. There is neither adequate training nor discipline among the people. I have not the shadow of a doubt that the people at large should pass one or more positive tests. Mere abstention from physical violence will not answer our purpose. In the centre of this programme of positive tests, I unhesitatingly put the spinning wheel and all it means. If there is quick response

this can be a short course, but it may well be a long course, if the people do not make an enthusiastic response. I know no other programme than the fourfold constructive programme of 1920. If the people do not take it up whole-heartedly, it is proof enough for me that they have no ahimsa in them, or not the ahimsa of my conception, or, say, they have no confidence in the present leadership. For me, there is no other test but what I have ever put before the nation since 1920. The new light tells me that I must not weaken, as I have done before, in exacting the discipline I have mentioned. I can quite clearly see my own way to advise civil disobedience wherever the conditions mentioned are amply fulfilled. That civil disobedience will be individual, but in terms of ahimsa, far more effective than any mass civil disobedience of the past. I must own that the past movements have been more or less tainted. I have no regret for them. For, I knew no better then. I had the sense and humility to retrace my steps whenever I discovered blunders. Hence the nation has gone forward from step to step. But the time has come for a radical change in the direction indicated."

"What about the swaraj that we have been fighting for?" asked some critics. "How does Gandhi's faith in non-violence burning brighter than ever help those who want swaraj here and now? Does not the emphasis on non-violence of his conception make of swaraj a very remote vision hardly to be fulfilled?"

On the way to Segaon, Gandhi took up this question for discussion with the Travancore workers:

"For me, it is true, as I have often declared, ahimsa comes before swaraj. I would not care to get power through anarchy and red ruin, among other things, because I want freedom and power even for the least among the people. This can only be, when freedom is won through non-violence. In the other case, the weak must go to the wall, only the physically strong and fit will remain to seize and enjoy power.

"But you too cannot help putting ahimsa before everything else if you really mean business. Ahimsa must be placed before everything else, while it is professed. Then alone it becomes irresistible. Otherwise, it will only be an empty husk, a thing without potency or power. A soldier fights with an irresistible strength when he has blown up his bridges and burnt his boats. Even so, it is with a soldier of ahimsa."

"How will this lowering of the pitch work out in action? How will it help us in attaining our goal of responsible government?" asked a worker.

"Today when we talk of the responsible government," explained Gandhi, "it frightens the states authorities. The paramount power too do not like it. They think that it will result in red ruin and anarchy. Their argument is unsound, but let us give them credit for honesty. If you follow my advice, therefore, you will say, 'We, for the time being, forget swaraj. We shall fight to vindicate the elementary rights of the people to remove corruption.' In short, you will concentrate your attention on the details of administration. The authorities will not be frightened, and it will give you the substance of responsible government. That has been the history of all my work in India. If I had only talked of swaraj, I would have come a cropper. But by attacking details, we have advanced from strength to strength.

"What did I do at the time of the Dandi march? I reduced our demand for complete independence to my eleven points. Motilalji was at first angry with me. 'What do you mean by lowering the flag like this,' he said. But he soon saw that if those points were conceded, independence would stand knocking at our door.

"Let me explain to you the working of my mind. As I have already told you, I had thought that responsible government in the states was within easy reach. We have now found that we can't at once take the masses with us along non-violent lines. You say that violence is committed by a few hooligans only; but capacity to obtain non-violent swaraj presupposes capacity on our part to control the hooligans too, as we temporarily did during the non-co-operation days. If you had complete control over the forces of violence and were ready to carry on the struggle with your back to the wall in defiance of the paramount power, neither looking to me nor to the Congress outside for guidance or help, you would not need to lower the key temporarily even. In fact, you will not be here to seek my advice at all.

"But that is not your case. Nor, so far as I know, is it the case anywhere in India. Otherwise, the people would not have suspended civil disobedience even without my asking."

The states problem was an urgent one, and Gandhi shed more light on it after reaching Segaon. On June 19, he wrote:

"With reference to my advice to the states people to lower their demands, if necessary, a correspondent asks: 'How far are people to go and what reduction, if any, is suggested or contemplated, for instance, in the Jaipur demand, which has been practically framed by you?' This question would never have arisen, if my language had been properly attended to. In the first place, I have added the proviso 'if necessary'. This must be clearly proved and each committee should judge the necessity and the extent of the reduction. In the second place, there can be no question of reduction where the people are ready for the exercise of the powers demanded and for the sacrifice involved in the development and the consolidation of the strength to enforce the demand. Take the case of Rajkot itself. Award or no award, if the people in general had the capacity for the required measure of sacrifice, and if they had been ready for swaraj, nothing would have kept them from their prize.

"It would be wrong to say or to believe that but for my mistake the people of Rajkot would have got what they wanted. My mistake has been admitted. But it must not be held responsible for the failure of the famous notification. The talk of demoralization resulting from my 'bad handling' of the situation is nonsensical. In satyagraha, there is no such thing as demoralization. Those who are truthful and non-violent and brave, do not cease to be so because of the stupidity of their leader. Of course, there would be demoralization or rather exposure, if these three virtues were put on for the occasion and were to fail on the real test being applied. People who are strong by nature displace the weak leaders and go about their business, as if they never needed one. If they needed a leader, they would soon elect a better one. Workers in the states should try to understand the Rajkot case, if they will profit by it. If it is too complicated for them, they should leave it alone and go forward as if it had not happened. Nothing will be more misleading than to think before my so-called mishandling of the Rajkot case, the princes were so trembling in their shoes that they were about to abdicate their power in favour of the people. What they were doing before I even went to Rajkot was to confer among themselves as to the ways and means of meeting the menace, as they thought it to be, to their very existence. We knew what Limbdi did. The talk of combining with the Muslims, Girasias and even the Depressed Classes against the Congress workers was in the air.

My action has resulted in the discovery of unholy combination. A true diagnosis is three-fourths the remedy. The workers are today in a position to devise remedies to combat the combination. It simply resolves itself into the necessity of Congressmen or satyagrahis gaining control over the forces arrayed against them. They are as much out to gain liberty for the Muslims, Girasias, Depressed Classes and even the princes, as for themselves. Satyagrahis have to show by cold reasoning and their conduct that the princes cannot remain autocrats for all time, and that it is to their interest to become trustees of their people, instead of remaining their masters. In other words, what I have done by correcting myself in Rajkot is to show the true way to the satyagrahis. In following it, they may find it only so as to really hasten their progress to their goal. Therefore, there can be no lowering out of weakness. Every lowering must be out of a due appreciation of the local situation and the capacity of the workers to cope with it. Here there is no room for demoralization and rout. In cases like Jaipur, of course, there can be no question of lowering. The demand itself is in the lowest pitch. There is no room in it for lowering anything. In essence, it is one for civil liberty. Civil liberty consistent with the observance of non-violence is the first step towards swaraj. It is the foundation of freedom. There is no room there for dilution or compromise. It is the water of life. I have never heard of water being diluted.

"Another question has been raised by another correspondent. He says: 'You expect us to work by negotiation. But if there is no wish on the other side and the only wish is to humiliate the party of freedom, what is to be done?' Of course, nothing is to be done except waiting and preparing for suffering and for promotion of constructive work.

"Absence of wish for negotiation by the authority may mean despise or distrust of the party of freedom. In either case, silent work is the remedy. Negotiation has been mentioned as a substitute for the ignoring of, the despise of, the constituted authority, whether it is the dewan or any other. What I have pleaded for is desire and readiness for negotiation. It is not inconceivable that the stage of negotiation may never be reached. If it is not, it must not be for the fault of the satyagrahis."

Gandhi further examined "Its Implications" in an editorial in *Harijan* dated June 20:

"I am sorry that my statements about the states have perplexed even those, who have hitherto had no difficulty in understanding my writings or my actions. But the Rajkot statements, my actions in Rajkot, and the statement on Travancore have made 'confusion worse confounded'. I must, therefore, try to give the implications as I understand them of my recent writings and actions. . .

"My ideas on civil disobedience—individual, group or mass—have not changed, nor have my views about the relations between the Congress and the princes and the people changed. Nor has my view undergone any change that it is essential for the paramount power to do its duty towards the people of the states, a duty which it has woefully neglected all these years. My recantation had reference only to my own distrust in God in whose name the fast was undertaken and my seeking to supplement His work by Viceregal intervention. For me, to rely upon the Viceroy, instead of God or in addition to God, to act upon the Thakore Saheb, was an act of pure violence which the fast was never conceived to imply or use in the remotest degree.

"The positive implication of the Rajkot chapter in my life is the discovery that the non-violence claimed for the movement since 1920, marvellous though it was, was not unadulterated. And the results, though brilliant, would have been far richer, if our non-violence had been complete. A non-violent action accompanied by non-violence in thought and word should never produce enduring violent reaction upon the opponent. But I have observed that the movement in the states has produced violent reaction on the princes and their advisers. They are filled with distrust of the Congress and they do not want what they call interference from it. In some cases the very name 'Congress' is anathema. This should not have been the case.

"The value of the discovery lies in its reaction upon me. I have definitely stiffened in my demands upon would-be satyagrahis. If my stiffness reduces the number to an insignificant figure, I should not mind. If satyagraha is a universal principle of universal application, I must find an effective method of action even through a handful. And when I say I see the new light only dimly, I mean that I have not yet found with certainty how a handful can act effectively. It may be, as has happened throughout my life, that I shall know the next step only after the first has been taken. I

have faith that when the time for action has arrived, the plan will be found ready.

"But the impatient critic will say, 'The time has always been there for action; only you have been found unready!' I cannot plead guilty. I know to the contrary. I have been for some years saying that there is no warrant for resumption of satyagraha.

"The reasons are plain.

"The Congress has ceased to be an effective vehicle for launching nation-wide satyagraha. It has become unwieldy, it has corruption in it, there is indiscipline among Congressmen, and rival groups have come into being which would radically change the Congress programme, if they could secure majority. That they have failed hitherto to secure it, is no comfort to me. The majority has no living faith in its programme. In any case, satyagraha through a majority is not a feasible proposition. The whole weight of the Congress should be behind any nation-wide satyagraha.

"Then there is the ever-growing communal tension. Final satyagraha is inconceivable without an honourable peace between the several communities composing the Indian nation.

"Lastly, there is the provincial autonomy. But I adhere to my belief that we have not done anything like justice to the task undertaken by the Congress in connection with it. It must be confessed that the Governors have on the whole played the game. There has been very little interference on their part with the ministerial actions. But the interference, sometimes irritating, has come from Congressmen and Congress organizations. Popular violence should not have been there, whilst the Congressmen were in office. Much of the ministerial energy has been devoted to dealing with the demands and the opposition of Congressmen. If the ministers are unpopular, they can and should be dismissed. Instead, the ministers have been allowed to function without the active co-operation of many Congressmen.

"It will be contrary to every canon of satyagraha to launch upon the extreme step, till every other is exhausted. Such haste will itself constitute violence.

"It may be said in reply with some justification that if all the conditions I have mentioned are insisted upon, civil disobedience may be wellnigh impossible. But is that a valid objection? Every measure carries with it conditions for its adoption. Satyagraha is

no exception. But do I feel within me that some active form of satyagraha, not necessarily civil disobedience, must be available in order to end an impossible situation. India is facing an impossible situation. There must be either effective non-violent action or violence and anarchy, within a measurable distance of time. I must examine this position on a future occasion."

In the subsequent issues of *Harijan*, Gandhi further dealt with the Rajkot step. He wrote:

"In theory, if there is sufficient non-violence developed in any single person, he should be able to discover the means of combating violence, no matter how widespread or severe, within his jurisdiction. I have repeatedly admitted my imperfections. I am no example of perfect ahimsa. I am evolving. Such ahimsa as has been developed in me, has been found enough to cope with situations that have hitherto arisen. But, today, I feel helpless in the face of the surrounding violence. There was a penetrating article in the *Statesman* on my Rajkot statement. The editor had contended that the English had never taken our movement to be true satyagraha but being practical people, they had allowed the myth to continue though they had known it to be a violent revolt. It was none the less so, because the rebels had no arms. I have only quoted the substance from memory. When I read the article, I felt the force of the argument. Though I had intended the movement to be pure non-violent resistance, as I look back upon the happenings of those days, there was undoubtedly violence among the resisters! I must own that had I been perfectly tuned to the music of ahimsa, I would have sensed the slightest departure from it, and my sensitiveness would have rebelled against any discord in it.

"It seems to me that the united action of the Hindus and the Muslims blinded me to the violence that was lurking in the breasts of many. The English, who are trained diplomats and administrators, are accustomed to the line of least resistance, and when they found that it was more profitable to conciliate a big organization than to crush it by extensive frightfulness, they yielded to the extent that they thought was necessary. It is, however, my firm conviction that our resistance was predominantly non-violent in action and will be accepted as such by the future historian. As a seeker of truth and non-violence, however, I must not be satisfied with mere action, if it is not from the heart. I must declare from

the house-tops that the non-violence of those days fell far short of the non-violence as I have so often defined.

"Non-violent action without the co-operation of the heart and the head cannot produce the intended result. The failure of our imperfect ahimsa is visible to the naked eye. Look at the feud that is going on between the Hindus and the Muslims. Each is arming for the fight with the other. The violence that we had harboured in our breasts during the non-co-operation days is now recoiling upon ourselves. And the violent energy that was generated among the masses, but was kept under check in pursuit of a common objective, has now been let loose, and is being used among and against ourselves.

"The same phenomenon is discernible, though in a less crude manner, in the dissension among Congressmen themselves and the use of forcible methods that the Congress ministers are obliged to adopt in running the administrations under their charge.

"This narrative clearly shows that the atmosphere is surcharged with violence. I hope it also shows that non-violent mass movement is an impossibility, unless the atmosphere is radically changed. To blind one's eyes to the events happening around us is to court disaster. It has been suggested to me that I should declare mass civil disobedience and all internal strife will cease, the Hindus and the Muslims will compose their differences, Congressmen will forget mutual jealousies and fights for power. My reading of the situation is wholly different. If any mass movement is undertaken at the present moment in the name of non-violence, it will resolve itself into violence largely unorganized and organized in some cases. It will bring discredit on the Congress, spell disaster for the Congress struggle for independence and bring ruin to many a home. This may be a wholly untrue picture born of my weakness. If so, unless I shed that weakness, I cannot lead a movement which requires great strength and resolution.

"But if I cannot find an effective purely non-violent method, outbreak of violence seems to be as certainty. The people demand self-expression. And they are not satisfied with the constructive programme prescribed by me and accepted almost unanimously by the Congress. As I have said before, the imperfect response to the constructive programme is itself proof positive of the skin-deep nature of the non-violence of Congressmen.

"But if there is an outbreak of violence, it would not be without cause. We are yet far from the independence of our dream. The irresponsibility of the Centre, which eats up eighty per cent of the revenue, grinds down the people and thwarts their aspirations, is daily proving more and more intolerable.

"There is a growing consciousness of the terrible autocracy of the majority of the states. I admit my responsibility for the suspension of civil resistance in several states. This has resulted in demoralization among the people and the princes. The people have lost nerve and feel that all is lost. The demoralization among the princes consists in their thinking that now they have nothing to fear from the people, nothing substantial to grant. Both are wrong. The result does not dismay me. In fact, I had foretold the possibility of these results, when I was discussing with the Jaipur workers the advisability of suspending the movement, even though it was well circumscribed with rules and restrictions. The demoralization among the people shows that there was not non-violence in thought and word, and, therefore, when the intoxication and the excitement of jail-going and the accompanying demonstrations ceased, they thought that the struggle was over. The princes came to the hasty conclusion that they could safely consolidate their autocracy by adopting summary measures against the resisters and placating the docile element by granting eye-wash reforms.

"Both the people and the princes might have reacted in the right manner—the people by recognizing the correctness of my advice and calmly generating strength and energy by their quiet and determined constructive effort, and the princes by seizing the opportunity afforded by suspension, of doing justice for the sake of justice and granting reforms that would satisfy the reasonable but advanced section among their people. This could only happen, if the princes recognized the time spirit. It is neither too late for the people nor the princes.

"In this connection, I may not omit the paramount power repenting of the recent declarations about freedom to the princes to grant such reform to their people as they chose. There are audible whispers that the princes may not take those declarations literally. It is an open secret that the princes dare not do anything that they guess is likely to displease the paramount power. When there is this tremendous influence exercised over the princes, it is but

natural to hold the paramount power responsible for the unadulterated autocracy that reigns supreme in many states.

"If violence breaks out in this unfortunate land, responsibility will have to be shared by the paramount power, the princes, and above all by the Congressmen. The first two have never claimed to be non-violent. Their power is frankly derived from and based on the use of violence. But the Congress has since 1920 adopted non-violence as its settled policy and has undoubtedly striven to act up to it. But as Congressmen never had non-violence in their hearts, they must reap fruit of the defect, however unintentional it was. At the crucial moment the defect has come to the surface and the defective method does not seem to meet the situation. Non-violence is never a method of coercion, it is one of conversion. We have failed to convert the princes and we have failed to convert the English administrators. It is no use saying that it is impossible to persuade persons willingly to part with their power. I have claimed that satyagraha is a new experiment. It will be time to pronounce it a failure, when Congressmen have given it a genuine trial. Even a policy, if it is honestly pursued, has to be pursued with all one's heart. But we have not done so. And hence Congressmen will have to convert themselves before the paramount power and the princes can be expected to act justly.

"But if the Congressmen can or will go no further than they have done in the direction of non-violence, and if the paramount power and the princes do not voluntarily and selfishly do the right thing, the country must be prepared for violence, unless the new technique yields a new mode of non-violent action which will become an effective substitute for violence, as a way of securing redress of wrongs. The fact that violence must fail will not prevent its outbreak. Mere constitutional agitation will not do."

In his appeal to the princes, Gandhi wrote:

"Several persons interested in the states have asked me what, in my opinion, is the minimum that all the states should guarantee in order to come in a line with the enlightened opinion in what is called British India. I cannot vouch for what the Congress would say, if it had to give any such opinion. A democratic body can only pronounce opinion on events as they happen. Be that as it may, the opinion I am about to give is only my own, and binds no one but me.

"The minimum, then, that all states, great and small, can give is: (1) Full civil liberty, so long as it is not used to promote violence directly or indirectly. It includes freedom of the press and freedom to receive newspapers which do not promote violence. (2) Freedom to the states people to form associations and educate public opinion in favour of establishing responsible government in their own states. (3) Freedom for Indians outside particular states to enter them without let or hindrance, so long as their activities are not directed towards the destruction of the states in question. (4) The privy purse should be limited so as not to exceed one-tenth of the income, where it ranges between Rs. 10 to 15 lakhs per year, and in no case should the purse exceed Rs. 3 lakhs per year, and should include all the private expenses of the ruler (for example, palace expenses, cars, stables, ruler's guests), except those which have reference to performance of public duty which should be defined. (5) Judiciary to be independent and permanent and free of interference. In order to ensure uniformity of practice and strict impartiality, there should be an appeal to the High Court of the province within which the state in question is situated. This may not be possible without a change in the law governing the High Courts. It can be easily altered if the states agree.

"I have purposely avoided reference to the constitutional reform. This will depend upon the situation as it exists in every state. I should assume that where the local public opinion demands it, the ruler is bound to respond.

"The most contentious part of my minimum is perhaps the right of appeal to the High Courts. And unless some such arrangement is made, pure justice cannot be guaranteed in the states whatever may be said to the contrary. This is the one institution which the British have built up with patient care. No doubt the High Court procedure is expensive and far from expeditious. The poor of the land cannot reach it. The processes are cumbersome. Often the unscrupulous win. With all their faults, however, and except where high politics have come in, the decisions of the High Courts have been just and fearless. I can think of no easy and ready-made check save that of the High Courts on the vagaries, and sometimes subservience to the executive, of the judiciary in the states. But I am not wedded to my solution. If something else equally effective can be devised, I should have no objection.

"One thing seems to me to be clear. If the transfer of power from the princes to the people is to take place without violence, and if the princes are to live as such, they will have to adapt themselves to the changed circumstances. Very few people have faith in my plan, namely, the plan of the princes voluntarily parting with power and becoming real trustees. The critics say it is utopian and against human nature. I must advocate it, so long as I believe in its practical possibility. The world is inevitably moving to self-destruction or to a non-violent solution of all its ailments, moral, social, economical and political. The threatened world war will bring us nearer the desirable solution, if a respectable part of it survives the impending catastrophe. Whoever recognizes that the only escape from the impending fate is a non-violent solution will, therefore, apply it to his own problems, whether they are domestic, communal or any other. Non-violence is a universal law acting under all circumstances. Disregard of it is the surest way to destruction. It is only a question of time.

"The princes would not solve the riddle by the proposed combination with Girasias, Muslims, Scheduled Classes, and their subjects who are too cowed down to resist. It is a combination that is bound to break under its own weight. It is itself an inflammable mixture. And a combination against whom? The Congress which seeks to represent all these, not excluding the princes themselves? The Congress will die a natural death when it ceases to be national in every sense of the term. It has that unbroken tradition for the past fifty years. Whatever transformation it undergoes, it is the only constitution that will succeed British imperialism whose days as imperialism are numbered. British politicians realize this. They would not resist, do not want to resist, its transformation or destruction. The imperialism is increasingly becoming a deadweight, if only because it is based on highly organized violence. Princes may ignore the Congress for a time. But they cannot for all time. Some are reported to have said that after all it was composed of *banias* who would show the white feather on a few knock-out blows on the head by the strong combination pictured above. I would like respectfully to point out that the Congress is not composed of *banias*, who can be counted on one's finger-tips. The millions who took part in the civil disobedience fights were not *banias*. I do not thereby mean to imply that they were desirous of giving

blow for a blow. Many could. But they had forsworn violence. Many Congress heads were broken by something severer than the knock-out blows. All I wish to imply is that the Congress is not composed of mere cowards. Non-violence and cowardice go ill together. I can imagine fully armed man to be at heart a coward. Possession of arms implies an element of fear, if not cowardice. But true non-violence is an impossibility without the possession of unadulterated fearlessness.

"I beseech the princes not to underrate the Congress as a force in the country. Its policy still remains non-violent. I admit it is fast tending towards violence. I and a few co-workers are putting forth every effort in favour of non-violence. I ask the princes, for their own sake and for the sake of the country that has given them birth, to throw in their weight in favour of non-violence. It seems to be touch-and-go with the Congress. It will either become growingly non-violent or will presently become a violent organization, not necessarily doing immediate deeds of violence but preparing itself for ultimate violence. It would not harbour cowards. If it does, it will cease to be the power it has become. Every Indian, high or low, has to make his choice."

House Divided

1939

In the last week of June 1939, Gandhi arrived in Bombay to advise the Working Committee on important issues. Addressing the meeting of the A.-I.C.C. on June 24, President Rajendra Prasad made a statement on behalf of the Working Committee:

"The crises that overhang the world and India today, demand from us unity of action, sinking of petty differences, co-operation of all those who care for the independence of India, and maintenance of the Congress as a strong and disciplined organization.

"The danger of war is ever present, and it might materialize in the course of months. This would be a disaster to the world, but if unfortunately war comes, attempts are likely to be made to involve India in it. We must, therefore, be ready to meet this crisis and to resist all attempts to drag us into war, and thus give effect to the oft-declared policy of the Congress.

"But apart from the international happenings, the national problems that we have to face are of the gravest import. . . In Indian states, there has been a marked deterioration of the situation and many of the rulers or their advisers have pursued the policy of intensive repression and, in some cases, of unabashed gangsterism against the people. The Working Committee realize fully that the struggle in the states is a vital part of the larger struggle for Indian freedom and cannot be dissociated from it. But the committee are convinced that the burden of the struggle must inevitably fall on the people of the Indian states and they cannot advance without developing self-reliance and strength. A significant feature of the struggle in the states has been the part played by the representatives of the British Government. This policy of the British Government has further demonstrated the dangers in the scheme of federation which the Congress has completely rejected. Although federation is not a live issue at present, it is possible that attempts might still

be made to impose it on India. Such an imposition, if it comes, must be combated and the country prepared for it.

"The provincial Governments have today to face many serious problems which require for their solution the united strength and wisdom of all of us. In some provinces, communalism and sectarianism have increased and have resulted in riots and bloodshed, and in intolerance and bitterness of feeling. There are thus all these and many other vital problems which face the country, and it is clear that the Congress can only tackle them effectively, if its own house is in order.

"Every member of the Congress must realize that by saying or doing anything to bring the Congress into disrepute or to weaken its prestige and influence, he is doing injury to the national cause. There have been in the past many instances where Congressmen, and even those occupying prominent positions in the organization, have not hesitated to speak or act in a manner which is contrary to all discipline and which has injured the great organization itself of which they claim to be the loyal members. If such indiscipline and such disruptive tendencies continue, the Congress inevitably will be reduced to impotence. They have to be checked. And in the event of individual Congressman deliberately discrediting the Congress and promoting indiscipline, it becomes inevitable for disciplinary action to be taken against the Congressman in the interests of the organization and the cause. The Working Committee hope that a joint endeavour will be made to lessen the spirit of faction within the Congress and in the country, so that in the trials to come, the Congress may be fully prepared to carry India's cause to a successful conclusion."

The A.-I.C.C. passed two important resolutions: one relating to satyagraha in the provinces said that no Congressman may offer or organize any form of satyagraha in the administrative provinces of India without the sanction of the provincial Congress committee concerned; the other defining the relation between the Congress ministries and the provincial Congress committees. The resolutions were opposed by Subhas Bose and the socialists, but were passed by a large majority after full discussion.

Gandhi wrote an editorial on the "South Africa Resolution":

"It is a matter of congratulation that the South Africa resolution of the A.-I.C.C. escaped complete disfigurement which the learned

Dr. Lohia's amendment would have caused. I tender my thanks to him for having listened to Jawaharlal's advice to respect the opinion of an expert like me who had passed the best part of his life in South Africa and who had not lost touch with that great country after retiring from it. This incident is an illustration showing that mere learning, mere humanitarianism divorced from actual experience, may spell disaster to the cause sought to be espoused. Dr. Lohia's amendment had as much place in the resolution as mine would have in a resolution framed by him, as an authority on socialism, to meet a socialist difficulty. And if I made any such attempt, he would very properly say, 'Don't pass the resolution if you don't like it, but don't disfigure it. It would defeat the purpose for which it is framed.' What I have said about the South Africa resolution applies more or less to the Working Committee's resolutions. That committee is the expert body on matters relating to the Congress. It is dangerous to tamper with its resolutions, unless reason convinces the cabinet of the soundness of alterations suggested by members of the A.-I.C.C. The acceptance of this practical advice which I tendered more than once, when I was a member of the Working Committee, would facilitate the despatch of national business.

"Having said this, let me say for the information of Dr. Lohia and his fellow humanitarians that I yield to no one in my regard for the Zulus, the Bantus and the other races of South Africa. I used to enjoy intimate relations with many of them and I had the privilege of often advising them. It used to be my constant advice to our countrymen in South Africa never to exploit or deceive these simple folk. But it was not possible to amalgamate the two causes. The rights and the privileges—if any could be so called—of the indigenous inhabitants are different from those of the Indians. So are their disabilities and their causes. But if I discovered that our rights conflicted with their vital interests, I would advise the forgoing of those rights. They are the inhabitants of South Africa as we are of India. The Europeans are undoubtedly the usurpers, exploiters or conquerors or all these rolled into one. And so the Africans have a whole code of laws specially governing them. The Indian segregation policy of the Union Government has nothing in common with the policy governing the African races. It is unnecessary for me to go into details. Suffice it to say that ours is a

tiny problem compared to the vast problem that faces the African races and that affects their progress. Hence it is not possible to speak of the two in the same breath. The A.-I.C.C. resolution concerns itself with the civil resistance struggle of our countrymen on a specific issue, applicable solely to them. It is now quite easy to see that Dr. Lohia's amendment, if it had remained, would have been fatal to the resolution which would have become perfectly meaningless. The appeal to the Union Government would have lost all its point.

"But, good often comes out of evil. The amendment, withdrawn wisely, shows to the Africans and to the world in general that India has great regard and sympathy for all the exploited races of the earth and that she would not have a single benefit at the expense of the vital interest of any of them. Indeed, the war against imperialism cannot wholly succeed, unless all exploitation ceases. The only way it can cease is for every exploited race or nation to secure freedom without injuring any other.

"But my examination of the South Africa resolution would be incomplete, if I did not warn the Indians in South Africa against building much on the resolution itself. It is a potent resolution, only if the Indians take the contemplated action. The motherland will not be able to protect their self-respect, if they are not prepared to protect it themselves. They must, therefore, be ready to suffer for it. The struggle may be prolonged and suffering great. But they will have the moral backing of the whole nation. In this, the Hindus, Muslims, and all political parties, including Europeans, are united. The Government of India may feel powerless. I fancy they are not so powerless as they imagine. I am reminded of 'the thought for the day' in the *Times of India* of the 24th instant. It begins, 'We have more power than will.' I know their sympathy is with the Indians. If they have the strength of will, they have the power. Our countrymen in South Africa know the conditions of satyagraha. The foremost condition is unity among themselves.

"To the Union Government I would say, 'You have not proved your case. Your best men have admitted that there is no difficulty in your absorbing the two hundred thousand Indians in your continent. They are but a drop in the ocean. Remember that eighty per cent of them are born in South Africa. They have adopted your manners and customs and costume. They are intelligent. They

have the same feelings and emotions that you have. They deserve better treatment than to be regarded untouchables, fit only to be relegated to ghettos. This is not playing the game. And you should not wonder if, at last, the Indians say, 'We shall rather die in your gaols than live in your segregation camps.' I am sure you do not want to go to all that length. Let it not be said of you that you had no respect for your promises."

There were fights over big and small issues. The national flag and "Bande Mataram" had become the targets of criticism. Gandhi wrote on this in *Harijan* dated July 1:

"The question of the use of the national flag still continues to agitate the public mind. It was designed when non-co-operation was at its height. It was accepted without reserve, without opposition, by all the communities. The Muslims and others vied with the Hindus in hoisting and carrying and honouring it. I recall having listened to the Ali brothers enthusing over its praises from many a platform. It was conceived as a symbol of the peaceful revolt against imperialistic exploitation of a nation pledged to non-violence through a mighty, constructive, united effort through the spinning wheel and khadi, signifying out-and-out swadeshi and identity with the poorest in the land. It symbolized unbreakable communal unity, the colours being specially and deliberately designed and chosen. It can admit of no competition as national flag. At the national gatherings, it should command unquestioned and universal respect. But it has to be admitted that it does not command that respect today. Instead of being a symbol of simplicity, purity and unity, and through these a determined revolt against exploitation—moral, material and political—it nowadays often becomes a signal for communal quarrels. Even among Congressmen attempt is made to prefer the red flag to the Tricolour. Some Congressmen do not even hesitate to run it down.

"In these circumstances, I personally would like to remove it from public gatherings and not unfurl it till public feel the want and impatiently demand to see it restored to its original, unique place. But the vast majority of Congressmen, who have suffered under this well-tried banner and drawn inspiration and strength from it, will not go the length I would like them to. I, therefore, suggest that where there is any opposition in a mixed gathering, the flag should not be hoisted. This can happen in schools, colleges,

local boards, municipal councils and the like. The flag should not be insisted on, where there is opposition even from one member. Let it not be called the tyranny of one person. When one person among many offers opposition and if he is allowed to have way, it is a proof of magnanimity or far-sightedness on the part of the overwhelming majority. And I have no doubt that this is the most effective non-violent way of dealing with the question. My advice applies even to those places where the flag is already flying. The flag was triumphantly flown in many places, when the nation was offering non-co-operation on a scale perhaps hitherto unknown in history. Times are changed. Opposition wherever it is offered, is fomenting communal dissensions. Surely, it is wisdom on the part of those who treasure the flag and unity to submit to the opposition of a minority, be it ever so small.

"What I have said about the flag applies *mutatis mutandis* to the singing of 'Bande Mataram'. No matter what its source was and how and when it was composed, it had become a most powerful battle cry among Hindus and Muslims of Bengal during the partition days. It was an anti-imperialist cry. As a lad, when I knew nothing of *Anandamath* or even Bankim, its immortal author, 'Bande Mataram' had gripped me, and when I first heard it sung it had enthralled me. It never occurred to me that it was a Hindu song or meant only for the Hindus. Unfortunately now we have fallen on evil days. All that was pure gold before has become base metal today. In such times, it is wisdom not to market pure gold and let it be sold as base metal. I would not risk a single quarrel over singing 'Bande Mataram' at a mixed gathering. It will never suffer from disuse. It is enthroned in the hearts of millions. The flag and the song will live, as long as the nation lives."

The A.-I.C.C. over, Gandhi started for the north. As the train carrying him to the Frontier Province was steaming out of the station, Rao Bahadur Bole handed him a copy of the petition of the Bhandaris of Bombay. According to it, the Bhandaris had got the concession to tap trees as early as 1672, as a mark of favour for military services rendered to the British power. Later they lost the concession. But they were able to continue their occupation, and to the present day, that was the occupation of about 8,000 people. The petitioners stated that they were not against prohibition but they pleaded for gradualness extending over a few years. "If the

Government fail to pay heed to all these entreaties and leave the Bhandaris to their fate as it falls upon them, we don't know what course these poorly educated and uneducated people may follow in their disappointment. We are afraid they may even go to the length of adopting not only the Congress methods of seeking relief but adopting more drastic measures in their frenzy."

Gandhi read the petition in the train and wrote a note in *Harijan*: "In these days of growing violence of the mind, threats must be regarded as the ordinary lot of ministers elected under the extensive democratic franchise. They may not be deterred even at the cost of their offices or lives from doing what they hold to be their duty, nor can they afford to be angry and refuse to do justice because, as in the case under consideration, the petition for justice ends by issuing an ugly threat. I have, therefore, the pleasure in informing the public that the ministers are applying themselves to the task of keeping every tapper employed at the very work, to which he had been used. Only the tappers have got to help the ministers to apply the remedy. It consists in the tappers tapping *nira* during the *nira* season and turning it into *gur*. . . If they are in earnest, they will help the Government and help themselves."

No sooner had Gandhi reached Peshawar, he had the painful duty to warn Subhas Bose. July 9, the day of protest by the left consolidation group against some resolutions of the A.-I.C.C., was utilized by Bose for criticizing the Bombay ministry's prohibition policy as detrimental to the minorities and especially to the Parsis. Under "A Dangerous Game", Gandhi wrote:

"I have read Subhas Babu's statement on the Bombay prohibition with pain and sorrow. He had discussed the question with me, when I was in Bombay. I had told him to confer with the Bombay ministers. I do not know whether he did so. But I was unprepared for his public statement. He has used the arguments of the opponents of prohibition. He was President of the Congress last year, and having been duly elected for the second year, he chose to resign owing to differences with his colleagues. He is still the head of the Bengal Congress executive. He is identified with the prohibition policy of the Congress. His responsibility has not ceased, because he is no longer in the Working Committee. Had he been a member, he could not have spoken as he has done. His statement, because of his position, is calculated to discredit the Bombay

ministry in a manner the avowed opponents of prohibition could never hope to do. I can only hope that in this matter Subhas Babu does not reflect the opinion of any other responsible Congressman, and that the general public will continue to support the Bombay ministerial policy with as much enthusiasm as hitherto.

"The ministers' duty is quite plain. They have to pursue their own programme, undeterred by any opposition, if they have faith in it. Prohibition is the greatest moral reform in the Congress programme. The Congress governments have the backing of the public opinion. The Working Committee after careful deliberation issued its mandate on prohibition. The ministers all over have taken it up to the best of their ability. The manner of execution naturally was left to the respective ministries. The Bombay ministers have been courageously pursuing their programme with every prospect of success. Theirs is a difficult position. But they were bound to tackle Bombay some day or other. They would be faced with the same opposition as today from the interests directly affected by the prohibition policy. It is not open to any Congressman to embarrass the ministers, as Subhas Babu has done.

"The communal question does not arise here at all. Subhas Babu has rendered a great disservice to the Congress by raising the communal cry and the cry of minorities. Independence of India is impossible, if causes great or small are to be discredited and ruined on the altar of the minority cry. He has played a most dangerous game by mixing up the communal question with such a purely moral reform as prohibition. It is as much the concern of a Parsi or a Muslim or a Christian, as of a Hindu, to look after his less fortunate countryman who happens to be a labourer and falls a victim to drink. The Bombay property-owner will pay one crore rupees as additional tax, not because they are Parsis or Muslims but because they are property-owners. It is altogether misleading to suggest that the taxpayer, himself a non-drinker, will pay the tax for saving the drunkard. He will pay the tax for the education of his children, whereas hitherto the drinker has been made by him to pay for that education. The additional tax will be a tardy but very small reparation for the wrong done by the monied men to the poor. And the poor have no class. They irrespective of their caste and creed make by themselves a downtrodden class. Their enforced creed is wretched poverty.

"The Parsis are philanthropists of the world. Why should they be behindhand in this the greatest philanthropy? And if theirs is the greatest contribution, it is but in accordance with their best tradition. They will be thrice blessed. Many of them will be weaned from a trade which corrupts the morals of their countrymen less fortunately placed than they. And they will themselves be weaned from the drink habit. However mild it may be for them, I know, from having lived in intimate contact with them, that the drink does leave an indelible mark on them. Thirdly, the monied men amongst them will have paid for the long delayed reform. The cry of the minorities is a calumny. It is a Parsi minister to whose lot has fallen the privilege of introducing prohibition. Dr. Gilder's is a job which brings him no money and it brings him drudgery and loss of a princely medical practice. Another equally disinterested physician is the Sheriff of Bombay. A third learned Parsi is the Vice-Chancellor of the Bombay University, and a fourth businessman is the Mayor of Bombay. I do not know that there has been such a happy conjunction before in the history of Bombay. If Congressmen and the Congress ministry of Bombay were communally-minded and were indifferent to the minorities, this unique event would not have taken place.

"I suggest that without the willing co-operation of the Muslim population of Bombay, the movement in Bombay could not have been introduced. I am quite sure that the best Muslim mind in all India is with the Congress in this Bombay project.

"A piecemeal solution flung by Subhas Babu would not work. For one thing, it would lack the psychological background. Therefore, I invite Subhas Babu to retrace his steps and to join me in making an appeal to the great Parsi community and those others who may oppose the reform to help it to become the success which it deserves to be. It is his duty, as Rajen Babu's immediate predecessor, to help the Bombay ministry which is bravely pursuing the policy laid down for it by the Congress."

On the evening of July 7, Gandhi reached Abbotabad, a hill-station. He had enough time to think and write, especially as he was kept free of engagements. On July 19, he wrote an editorial, "Not Guilty", in reply to Dr. Lohia's letter on the current controversy on the Congress resolution regarding satyagraha. "You will not permit the slightest separation of the principle of satyagraha,

from your own specific programme," argued Dr. Lohia. "Is it not possible to universalize the principle of satyagraha and to make it the bed-rock of programmes other than your own? Perhaps, it is not; but I have this argument against you that you have not permitted and encouraged any such experiment. The people today do not regard your own programme in the ministerial action and constructive activities as wholly adequate; they are experimenting with such programmes as those of peasant action. These newer programmes entail an amount of local and isolated action, even during such times when there is no general satyagraha. Will you stop these little satyagrahas, till you have found the formula for the general satyagraha? In such a course of action, there is the danger of anarchy that arises out of suppression. Non-violent collective action is among the rarest and the most precious gifts received by mankind in all history. We may not, however, know how to treasure it and continue it."

Gandhi replied: "Not only have I not prohibited the separation of the principle of satyagraha from my own specific programme, but I have often invited new programmes. But hitherto, I have not known a single case of new programme. I have never suggested that there can never be any departure from or addition to my programme. What, however, I have said and would like to repeat here is that I cannot bless or encourage a new programme that makes no appeal to me. My programme, I claim, is a deduction from the satyagraha of my conception. It is, therefore, likely that if there was any such vital activity favouring the growth of satyagraha, it would not escape me.

"I am painfully conscious of the fact that my programme has not made a general appeal to the Congress intelligentsia. I have already pointed out that the reason for the apathy of Congressmen is not to be sought in any inherent defect in the programme, but that it is due to the want of a living faith in ahimsa. What can be more patent than that we should have complete communal harmony, eradication of untouchability, sacrifice of the drink revenue by the closing of liquor shops, and the replacement of mill cloth by khadi? I suggest that non-violent swaraj is impossible, if Hindus and Musalmans and others do not shed their mutual distrust and do not live as blood brothers, if Hindus do not purify themselves by removing the curse of untouchability and thus establish intimate

contact with those whom they have for ages put beyond the pale of society, if the wealthy men and women of India will not tax themselves, so that the poor who are helpless victims of the drink and drug habit may have the temptation removed from them by the closing of drink and drug shops, and, lastly, if we all will not identify ourselves with the semi-starved millions by giving up the taste for mill cloth and revert to khadi produced by many million hands in the cottages. In all that has been written against the constructive programme, I have not come across a single convincing argument against either its intrinsic merit or its merit in the terms of non-violent swaraj. I make bold to say that if all Congressmen concentrate themselves on this programme, we shall soon have the requisite non-violent atmosphere throughout the length and breadth of the land for cent per cent satyagraha.

"Take the peasant action suggested by Dr. Lohia as a possible new programme. I regret to have to say that, in most cases, the peasants are not being educated for non-violent action. They are being kept in a state of perpetual excitement and made to entertain hopes which can never be fulfilled without a violent conflict. The same may be said about labour. My own experience tells me that both the peasantry and labour can be organized for effective non-violent action, if Congressmen honestly work for it. But they cannot, if they have no faith in the ultimate success of non-violent action. All that is required is the proper education of the peasantry and labour. They need to be informed that if they are properly organized, they have more wealth and resources through their own labour than the capitalists through their money. Only capitalists have control over the money market, labour has not over its labour market, although if labour had been well served by its chosen leaders it would have become conscious of the irresistible power that comes from proper instruction in non-violence. Instead, labour in many cases is being taught to rely on the coercive methods to compel compliance with its demands. The kind of training that labour generally receives today leaves it in ignorance, and it relies upon violence as the ultimate sanction. Thus it is not possible for me to regard the present peasant or labour activity as a new programme for the preparation of satyagraha.

"Indeed, what I see around me is not the preparation for a non-violent campaign but for an outbreak of violence, however

unconscious or unintended it may be. If I was invited to hold myself responsible for this ending to the past twenty years' effort, I should have no hesitation in pleading guilty. Have I not said as much in these columns? But my admission will not take us anywhere, unless it results in the retracing of our steps, the undoing of the wrong already done. This means having a reasoned faith in the non-violent method as the only means of gaining complete independence. When we have that faith, all bickerings within the Congress will cease, there will be no longer an ungainly scramble for power and there will be mutual help, instead of mutual mud-flinging. But it may be that Congressmen have come to believe that non-violence of my definition is played out or is not possible of attainment. In that case, there should be a conference, formal or informal, between all Congress groups or a special meeting of the A.-I.C.C. to consider the question whether time has not come to revise the policy of non-violence and the consequent constructive programme and to find out a programme in consonance with and answering the present temper of Congressmen. It is up to every Congressman to carry on a fierce search inward and to deal with this central problem. It is not safe or dignified for the Congress to follow the policy of drift. I would like such a meeting to forget that the members belong to different groups and to remember that they are first and last servants of the nation, pledged to fight the nation's battle of freedom with one mind. The Congress today is a house divided against itself. It must not be."

In his retreat at Abbottabad, Gandhi gave no interviews on the political questions but he could not resist those who came to talk on other subjects. Some members of the Oxford Movement called on him to secure his support to the Moral Rearmament initiated by Dr. Frank Buchman. Gandhi was invited to put his signature to a "response" to President Roosevelt's message. Two of the paragraphs in it read thus:

"MRA means first of all a change of heart. It means admission of our responsibility for the past, a frank admission by nations as by individuals of the standards of honesty, purity, unselfishness and love and daily listening and daily obedience to God's direction.

"At this fateful hour, we pledge ourselves to give the last full measure of our devotion—to the moral and the spiritual rearmament of our nation—to building the world of tomorrow, the world

of new men, new nations, where every resource of human genius is liberated under God's leadership to enrich the heritage of all mankind."

With deference to those in India who had signed this response, Gandhi said he could not in all conscience sign it. He could not endorse a falsehood. "How can India accept responsibility for the past?" remarked Gandhi. "All this has no application to me. The whole paragraph applies to the exploiting nations, whereas India is an exploited nation. The second paragraph too applies to nations of the West and not to us. The whole appeal is so unreal. I can think of moral rearmament, but that would be in a different setting. I can think of communal unity through moral rearmament. As a member of an exploited nation, I can have a different moral rearmament programme, and I may invite China to it, but how can I invite the West or Japan? And just as it would be unreal for me to invite the West, it would to that extent be unreal for the West to invite India. Let them shed their exploitation policy and their immoral gains first."

Dr. Fabri, a Hungarian visitor, described himself as a follower of Buddha. He was particularly interested to know what kind of prayer Gandhi said. Can the Divine Mind be changed by prayer? Can one find it out by prayer?

"It is a very difficult thing to explain fully what I do when I pray," said Gandhi. "But I must try to answer the question. The Divine Mind is unchangeable, but that Divinity is in everyone and in everything—animate and inanimate. The meaning of prayer is that I want to evoke that Divinity within me. Now I may have that intellectual conviction, but not a living touch. And so when I pray for swaraj or independence for India, I pray or wish for the adequate power to gain that swaraj or to make the largest contribution I can towards winning it, and I maintain that I can get that power in answer to prayer."

"Then you are not justified in calling it prayer," said Dr. Fabri. "To pray means to beg or demand."

"Yes, indeed. You may say I beg it of myself, of my higher self, the real self with which I have not yet achieved complete identification. You may, therefore, describe it as a continual longing to lose oneself in the Divinity which comprises all."

"And you use an old form to evoke this?" asked Dr. Fabri.

"I do. The habit of a lifetime persists, and I would allow it to be said that I pray to an outside power. I am part of that Infinite and yet such an infinitesimal part that I feel outside it. Though I give you the intellectual explanation, I feel, without identification with the Divinity, so small, that I am nothing. Immediately I begin to say I do this and that, I begin to feel my unworthiness and nothingness, and feel that someone else, some Higher power has to help me."

"Tolstoy says the same thing," put in Dr. Fabri. "Prayer really is complete meditation and melting into the Higher Self, though one occasionally does lapse in imploration like that of a child to his father."

"Pardon me," said Gandhi, "I would not call it a lapse. It is more in the fairness of things to say that I pray to God who does exist somewhere up in the clouds, and the more distant He is, the greater is my longing for Him and find myself in his presence in thought. And thought as you know has a greater velocity than light. Therefore, the distance between me and Him, though incalculably great, is obliterated. He is so far and yet so near."

"It becomes a matter of belief, but some people like me are cursed with an acute critical faculty," replied Dr. Fabri. "For me, there is nothing higher than what Buddha taught, and no greater master. For Buddha alone among the teachers of the world said: 'Don't believe implicitly what I say. Don't accept any dogma or any book as infallible.' There is for me no infallible book in the world, inasmuch as all were made by men, however inspired they may have been. I cannot hence believe in a personal idea of God, a maharaja sitting on the Great White Throne, listening to our prayers. I am glad that your prayer is on a different level."

"Let me remind you," said Gandhi, "that you are again only partially true, when you say that my prayer is on a different level. I told you that the intellectual conviction that I gave you is not eternally present with me. What is present is the intensity of faith whereby I lose myself in an Invisible Power. So it is far truer to say that God has done a thing for me than that I did it. So many things have happened in my life for which I had intense longing, but which I could never have achieved myself. And I have always said to my co-workers it was in answer to my prayer. I did not say to them it was in answer to my intellectual effort to lose myself

in the Divinity in me. The easiest and the correct thing for me was to say, 'God has seen me through my difficulty.' "

"But that you deserved by your *karma*," contended Dr. Fabri. "God is Justice and not Mercy. You are a good man and so good things happen to you."

"No. I am not good enough for things to happen like that. If I went about with that philosophical conception of *karma*, I should come often a cropper. My *karma* would not come to my help. Although I believe in the inexorable law of *karma*, I am striving to do so many things, every moment of my life is a strenuous endeavour, which is an attempt to build up more *karma*, to undo the past and add to the present. It is, therefore, wrong to say that because my past is good, good is happening at present. The past would soon be exhausted, and I have to build up the future with prayer. I tell you *karma* alone is powerless. 'Ignite this match,' I say to myself, and yet I cannot, if there is no co-operation from without. Before I strike the match, my hand is paralysed or I have only one and the wind blows it off. Is it an accident or God or Higher Power? Well, I prefer to use the language of my ancestors or of children. I am no better than a child. We may try to talk learnedly and of books, but when it comes to brass tacks—when we are face to face with a calamity—we behave like children and begin to cry and pray and our intellectual belief gives no satisfaction."

"I know highly developed men to whom belief in God gives incredible comfort and help in the building of character," said Dr. Fabri. "But there are some great spirits that can do without it. That is what Buddhism has taught me."

"But Buddhism is one long prayer," rejoined Gandhi.

"Buddha asked everyone to find salvation for himself. He never prayed, he meditated," maintained Dr. Fabri.

"Call it by whatever name you like, it is the same thing. Look at his statues."

"But they are not true to life," said the archaeologist questioning the antiquity of these statues. "They are 400 years later than his death."

"Well," said Gandhi, "give me your own history of Buddha, as you may have discovered it and I will prove that he was a praying Buddha. The intellectual conception does not satisfy me. I have not given you a perfect and full definition, as you cannot describe

your thought. The very effort to describe is a limitation. It defies analysis and you have nothing but scepticism as the residue."

"What about the people who can't pray?" asked Dr. Fabri.

Gandhi replied: "Be humble I would say to them, and do not limit even the real Buddha by your own conception of Buddha. He could not have ruled the lives of millions of men that he did and does today, if he was not humble enough to pray. There is something infinitely higher than intellect that rules us and even the sceptics. Their scepticism and philosophy does not help them in critical periods of their lives. They need something better, something outside them, that can sustain them. And so, if someone puts a conundrum before me, I say to him, 'You are not going to know the meaning of God or prayer, unless you reduce yourself to a cipher.' You must be humble enough to see that in spite of your greatness and intellect, you are but a speck in the universe. A mere intellectual conception of the things of life is not enough. It is the spiritual conception which eludes the intellect, and which alone can give one satisfaction. Even the monied men have critical periods in their lives, although they are surrounded by everything that money can buy and affection can give, they find at certain moments in their lives utterly distracted. It is in these moments that we have a glimpse of God, a vision of Him who is guiding every one of our steps in life. It is prayer."

"You mean what we might call a true religious experience which is stronger than intellectual conception," said Dr. Fabri. "Twice in life I had that experience, but I have since lost it. But I now find great comfort in one or two sayings of Buddha. To think of these takes almost the place of belief."

"That is prayer," replied Gandhi with an insistence. Dr. Fabri found that it was impossible to take him further on the point, but he wanted to ask yet another question. Buddha had excused the monks who committed suicide. "What would you say to the right of man to dispose of his life?"

"I think," said Gandhi, "that man has a perfect right to dispose of his life under certain circumstances. A co-worker, suffering from leprosy, knowing that his disease was as much an agony for those who had to serve him as it was for him, recently decided to end his life by abstaining from food and water. I blessed the idea. I said, 'If you really think that you can stand the trial, you may do so.'

I said this to him for I knew how different it is to die by inches from, say, suddenly killing oneself by drowning or poisoning. And my warning was fully justified, for someone tempted him with the hope that there was one who could cure leprosy, and I hear that he has resumed eating and put himself under treatment."

"The criticism," said Dr. Fabri, "seems to me to be that if one's mind is completely obscured by pain, the best thing for him would be to seek nirvana. A man may not be ill, but he may be tired of the struggle."

"No," said Gandhi. "My mind rejects this suicide. The criterion is not that one is tired of life, but that one feels that one has become a burden on others and, therefore, wants to leave the world. One does not want to fly from pain, but from having to become an utter burden on others. Otherwise, one suffers greater pain in a violent effort to end one's agony. But supposing I have a cancer, and it is only a question of time for me to pass away, I would even ask my doctor to give me a sleeping draught and thereby have the sleep that knows no waking."

Dr. Fabri got up to go with the wish that there may be many more years of helpful activity left for Gandhi.

"No," said Gandhi with a hearty laugh, "according to you, I should have no business to stay if I feel I have finished my task. And I do think I have finished mine."

"No, I am convinced that you can serve humanity for many more years. Millions are praying for your life. And though I can neither pray nor desire anything..."

"Yes," said Gandhi interrupting him, "English language is so elastic that you can find another word to say the same thing."

"Yes," replied Dr. Fabri, "I can unselfishly opine that you have many years before you."

"Well that's it. You have found the word! Here too let me tell you there is the purely intellectual conception of a man being unable to live. If he has not the desire to live, the body will perish for the mere absence of the desire to live."

At the end of July, his stay at Abbottabad came to an end. On the eve of his departure, on July 24, Gandhi said at a meeting:

"I have more than once heard the complaint that the establishment of the Hindu-Muslim unity is being delayed owing to lack of sufficient effort in its behalf on my part, that if only I could

concentrate myself on it exclusively, it could be realized today. May I assure you that if I do not seem to be doing that today, it is not because my passion for Hindu-Muslim unity has grown less. But I have realized, as I had never done before, my own imperfection as an instrument for this high mission and the inadequacy of mere external means for the attainment of big objects. I have learnt more and more to resign myself utterly to His grace.

"If you could dissect my heart, you would find that the prayer and spiritual striving for the attainment of Hindu-Muslim unity goes on there unceasingly all the twenty-four hours without even a moment's interruption, whether I am awake or asleep. I want Hindu-Muslim unity, if only because I know that without it there can be no swaraj. Let no one imagine that the Hindus constitute the majority community and that they can win swaraj for India or even for themselves by organizing civil disobedience, without the backing or support of the other communities. Civil disobedience of the purest type, as I have often repeated, can be effective even if it is confined to a few. But then these few must represent in their persons the united will and strength of the whole nation. Is it not the same in armed warfare? The fighting forces need the backing and co-operation of the entire civil population. Without it, they will be crippled. I must be impatient for Hindu-Muslim unity, because I am impatient for swaraj. And I have full faith that true and lasting heart unity between the Hindus and Musalmans, not a merely patched-up political compromise, will come sooner or later, sooner perhaps than later. That dream has filled my being since my earliest childhood. I have the vividest recollection of my father's days, how the Hindus and Musalmans of Rajkot used to mix together and participate in one another's domestic functions and ceremonies, like blood brothers. I believe that those days will dawn once again over this country. The present bickerings and the petty recriminations between the communities are an unnatural aberration. They cannot last for ever.

"The greatest of things in this world are never accomplished through unaided human effort. They come in their own good time. God has His own way of choosing His instruments. Who knows, in spite of my incessant heart prayer I may not be found worthy for this great work. We must all keep our loins girt and our lamps well trimmed; we do not know when or on whom His choice may

fall. You may not shirk your responsibility by throwing it all on me. Pray for me that my dream may be fulfilled in my lifetime. We must never give way to despair or pessimism. God's ways are more than man's arithmetic.

"It has grieved me to find that internal squabbles have begun to fill the Congress ranks in this province too. Yesterday, I was closeted for over an hour with the members of your provincial Congress committee. They asked me to show them a way out. I suggest to you that the solution lies in your own hands. You have adopted Khan Saheb Abdul Ghaffar Khan as your uncrowned chieftain. You have given him proud titles of 'Badshah Khan' and 'Fakhr-e-Afghan'. Let his word be law to you, as it was before. He does not believe in argument. He speaks from his heart. You must learn to sink individual differences and work together like a team under him, if the titles that you have bestowed upon him are to be vindicated, and not remain as mere lip-compliments.

"There is the question of poverty among the Frontier masses. I am told that many of them hardly get enough to eat. It is a humiliating reflection that a sturdy race like the Pathans should be in that plight. But here again the remedy lies largely with you. You must teach the people to labour with their hands and realize the dignity of work. The ministry can and will provide the facilities. But the spade-work will have to be done by volunteers.

"May God show you the right way. I know that even when we quarrel amongst ourselves, it is only to hasten the advent of independence in the fond hope that independence will prove a solvent of all our ills. May our passion for independence prove a uniting bond, stronger than all the differences that divide us."

War

1939

On his return to Segaon from Abbottabad, at the end of July 1939, Gandhi wrote on the autocracy in the states: "The question of the states is daily assuming bigger and bigger proportions. The ruling chiefs are becoming free with their rifles. They feel that they are safe so far as the paramount power is concerned. The Congress has not much prestige with them. Many of them are now evolving measures to crush the growing spirit of their people and make it impossible, if they can, for the Congress to give effective guidance for them, let alone to interfere. Nevertheless the Congress has a duty to perform. The Congress cannot give up its duty of guiding the states people in the hour of their need. Time was when the Congress was guiding and protecting the rights of the states as against the paramount power. That the Congress may not always be able to give the people effective assistance is unfortunately too true. The Congress has to forge necessary sanction by putting the organization on a firmer footing and by wise restraint to acquire credit for impartiality and strictest justice."[1]

There was hunger-strike by the detenus in Bengal. Gandhi had sent Mahadev Desai to inquire. The prisoners expected definite assurance from Gandhi who replied: "I do feel very strongly that this fast is not justified. Such hunger-strikers, if they are largely copied, will break all discipline to pieces and make orderly government impossible. The prisoners' cause is essentially just, but they are weakening it by their persistence. I would ask them to live and listen to the advice of one who claims to be an expert in fasting and who claims also to know the science of political prisonership. Let them not hamper one whom they consider to be their best advocate." In response to Gandhi's touching appeal and intervention of Subhas Bose, eighty-nine detenus suspended their fast for two months.

Two days later, Sathe, a seasoned worker, went to Segaon determined to go on a fourteen-day fast in order to draw the attention of the Bombay ministry to the wrongs they had done and the principles they had forsaken. His protest was against the orders passed about processions, press security, and firings.

"If you are a satyagrahi," said Gandhi, "I too am a satyagrahi and as I have been told by many friends that you are a reasonable man, I shall show you that you are wrong. You ought to have exhausted all the constitutional means. You must remember that the Bombay Congress ministry is under four Congress committees—Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnatak and Bombay. You should have lodged your complaint before them. And failing satisfaction, you should have gone to the Working Committee, failing there to the A.-I.C.C., and then to the open session of the Congress. And if you accept my authority as an expert in satyagraha, then you should have come to me, but not with a decision to fast."

"I don't accept you as the final authority," retorted Sathe, "but I would certainly take your advice. Let me ask you one question. Whether all these Congress committees give their opinion in my favour or not, what if the ministers say that they have violated the Congress principles?"

"Do they say so?"

"Yes. But they will not resign they say, unless they are asked to resign. But they have broken the promises given in the election manifestoes."

"There is no rigidity about these manifestoes," replied Gandhi. "You may say many things, but you may not be able to carry them all out."

"My own Sadashiv Peth, which is one of the constituencies, did resolve that Bombay ministry had not fulfilled the promises," retorted Sathe.

"Well then let that committee approach the A.-I.C.C. But why this fast? You must exhaust all the natural steps."

"The natural steps take years. It is a cumbersome machinery."

"Not years, but it may take a year. That should not matter."

"I do propose to go to the open Congress, for the Congress is an authority above you."

"I am no authority," said Gandhi. "But I have a certain amount of moral influence."

"But you do not exercise it."

"How do you know? You must place all the facts before me and convince me that I have not done all in my power."

Sathe now proceeded to give the details of his grievances. "But you do not expect me to express my judgement on these matters," said Gandhi.

"I do."

"How can I? Your reading out the texts of orders to me and placing all the facts in your possession before me does not take me further. I must hear the ministers also."

"But that you can easily do. You are the High Command."

"How am I the High Command?"

"Well, you have said that the resignations of the ministers are in your pocket."

"When did I say so? Produce my statements."

Sathe laughed in reply.

"No, seriously," said Gandhi. "If I made any such preposterous statement, then it would be bravado. You do not find my name mentioned anywhere in the constitution. I can exercise my moral authority certainly, but that only when I see that there is something which ought to be done morally by the Working Committee or the ministry."

"Then, will you study the case while I go on with my fast?"

"How can you, when you have yet to convince me of the justifiability of your fast?"

"I am fasting only to arrest your attention."

"You will, if you do not fast. The moment you begin your fast you distract my attention, you paralyse my capacity for unbiased judgement. I could not enjoy my meals, if I knew that someone was fasting without any cause. And then you must know that this is a colony of fasters. There is Bhansali, the greatest faster I have known, Vinoba has fasted, and so has Kaka Saheb. You better see them and talk to them, and see if they approve of your going on a fast."

But Sathe now turned to the second of his counts, the demand of security from the newspapers. The British Government may have done it, but for the Congress Government to do so was sure the height of injustice. Why should the editors not be prosecuted? No security should be demanded without prosecution.

"I do not take your view," said Gandhi. "If we have a national Government, and we have the papers that thrive on prosecutions, what are we to do? But that only means that there are fundamental differences between us. We have got to examine everything. If you want me to use my moral authority, I must have certain conviction that the ministers have gravely erred in all the three matters you have mentioned. And if the conviction goes home, I would certainly like to speak to the ministers and to the Working Committee. But to do all this, I must examine your allegations at leisure. And you may be sure that though I have very little time I would study the papers you send me, just for your sake."

"But in the meanwhile I may fast."

"No. You can place the whole case before the Working Committee, if you like."

"What right have I?"

"Everyone has a right. The Working Committee is there to listen to every Congressman and non-Congressman with a grievance. But now that you have asked me to study the case, perhaps you may not want to put it before the Working Committee. After I have given my decision, you may reason with me, plead with me, and then if you find me obstinate, you can fast against me."

Sathe was not satisfied. "You are a student of the Gita," Gandhi observed.

"I am," affirmed Sathe.

"Well then, I tell you your fast would be the third kind of *tapas* described in the seventeenth chapter of the Gita—*tamasa tapas*, born of ignorance and perverseness."

That clinched the argument. "So I may fast a month hence, if I am not satisfied!"

"Yes, but if I want more time, you will give me."

On August 9, the Working Committee commenced its three-day session at Wardha to take important decisions. The committee considered the implication of the move by Subhas Bose and other office-bearers and members of the executive committees on July 9 when they organized protest meetings against the resolutions of the A.-I.C.C. The committee had before them the explanation of Subhas Bose who argued that it was his constitutional right to give expression to his views regarding any resolution passed by the A.-I.C.C. Denial of this constitutional right was, he maintained,

tantamount to suppression of civil liberty within the Congress. If this explanation was not considered satisfactory by the Working Committee, Subhas Bose took full responsibility for the demonstrations and expressed readiness to face any disciplinary action taken against him cheerfully. The committee passed a resolution declaring Subhas Bose ineligible for any elective post for three years. The resolution was drafted by Gandhi:

"The Working Committee has given most anxious consideration to the action of Shri Subhas Chandra Bose, the erstwhile President of the Indian National Congress, in connection with the two resolutions of the last meeting of the A.-I.C.C. known as 'Satyagraha in the Provinces' and 'The Congress Ministries and P.C.C.s'. The Working Committee also considered the long letter of Shri Subhas Bose in this connection. The Working Committee with great sorrow and reluctance has come to the conclusion that he has wholly missed the point raised by the Congress President, as clearly set forth in his declaration. As an ex-president, he should also have realized that, after having received peremptory instructions from the president, it was his clear duty, as the servant of the nation, to obey implicitly, even though he differed from the ruling of the president. It was open to him, if he felt aggrieved by the ruling to appeal to the Working Committee or the A.-I.C.C., but he was bound, as long the instructions of the president stood, to carry them out faithfully. This is the first condition of the proper functioning of any organization, much more so of a vast organization like the Indian National Congress, which is engaged in the life and death struggle with the best organized and the most powerful imperial corporation in the world.

"If what seems to be Shri Subhas Bose's contention in his letter, that every member is free to interpret the Congress constitution as he likes, prevails, there will be perfect anarchy in the Congress and it must break to pieces in no time. The Working Committee has come to the conclusion that it will fail in its duty if it condones the deliberate and flagrant breach of discipline by Shri Subhas Chandra Bose. The Working Committee resolves that for his grave act of indiscipline, Shri Subhas Chandra Bose is declared disqualified as the President of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee and to be a member of any elective Congress committee for three years as from August 1939. The Working Committee trusts that

Shri Subhas Chandra Bose will see the error of his ways and will loyally submit to the disciplinary action.

"The Working Committee has taken notice of the indiscipline of many other Congressmen, including responsible officials, and has refrained from taking any action, as the members acted under the inspiration of Shri Subhas Chandra Bose. We, however, leave it open to the provincial organizations to take action, if they think it necessary for proper observance of discipline and especially if the offending members do not express regret for their indiscipline. The committee further empowers the president to take disciplinary action against such members who, instead of expressing regret for their conduct of indiscipline, persist in it."

The Congress Working Committee then discussed the critical international situation. It declared its opposition to any imperialist war and reiterated its determination to oppose all attempts to impose a war on India. It condemned the sending of troops to Egypt and Singapore and prolonging the life of the Central Assembly by another year. As a first step in the protest against the flouting of public opinion, the committee called upon all Congress members of the Central Legislative Assembly to refrain from attending the next session of the assembly. The resolution concluded thus: "The committee further remind provincial governments to assist in no way the war preparations of the British Government and to keep in mind the policy laid down by the Congress, to which they must adhere. If the carrying out of this policy leads to resignations or the removal of the Congress ministers, they must be prepared for this contingency."

The Working Committee discussed hunger-strikes in Bengal and elsewhere. Under "Hunger-strike", Gandhi wrote:

"Hunger-strike has positively become a plague. On the slightest pretext, some people want to resort to hunger-strikes. It is well that the Working Committee has condemned the practice in unequivocal terms, so far at least as hunger-strike for discharge from imprisonment is concerned. The committee should have gone further and condemned also the practice of forcible feeding. For, I regard forcible feeding as an undue liberty with the human body which is too sacred to be trifled with, even though it belongs to a prisoner. No doubt the state has control over the bodies of its prisoners but never to the extent of killing their soul. That control

has well-defined limits. If a prisoner decides to starve himself to death, he should, in my opinion, be allowed to do so. A hunger-strike loses its force and dignity, when it has any, if the striker is forcibly fed. It becomes a mockery, if somehow or other sufficient nourishment is poured down the throat, whether through the mouth or the nose. It is my firm conviction that the method of forcible feeding should be abandoned as a relic of barbarism.

"It is also worthy of consideration whether a rule should not be passed by the Working Committee making a public and political hunger-strike, without permission, a breach of discipline. I do not like restraint on the liberty of the individual, except for his own good and that of the society of which he is a member. Hunger-strike has, however, become such a nuisance that it will be as well for the Working Committee to adopt measures to check it before it assumes dangerous proportions. A Working Committee resolution in such matters means expression of considered public opinion and is likely to prove a deterrent against an abuse of the practice. It may never need to be enforced."

In the next issue, he commented on the "Two Resolutions":

"I continue to receive letters, mostly abusive, about what may be called the Subhas Babu resolution of the Working Committee. I saw a letter addressed to Rajendra Babu, which can hardly be surpassed in the use of filthy language. I have seen some criticisms about the war resolution.

"I owe it to the public to make my position clear about both these resolutions. I must confess that the Subhas Babu resolution was drafted by me. I can say that the members of the Working Committee would have shirked the duty of taking action, if they could have. They knew that there would be a storm of opposition against their action. It was easier for them to have a colourless resolution, than to have one which was no respecter of persons. Not to take some action would have amounted to the abdication of their primary function of preserving discipline among Congressmen. Subhas Babu has invited action. He had gallantly suggested that if any action was to be taken it should be taken against him as the prime mover. In my opinion, the action taken by the Working Committee was the mildest possible. There was no desire to be vindictive. And surely, the word 'vindictiveness' loses all its force and meaning, when the position of Subhas Babu is considered. He

knew that he could not be hurt by the Working Committee. His popularity had put him above being affected by any action that the Working Committee might take. He had pitted himself against the Working Committee, if not the Congress organization. Therefore, the members of the Working Committee had to perform their duty and leave the Congressmen and the public to judge between themselves and Subhas Babu. It has been suggested that Subhas Babu has done what I too would have done under similar circumstances. I cannot recall a single instance in my life of having done what Subhas Babu has done, that is, defied an organization to which I owed allegiance. I could understand rebellion after secession from such an organization. That was the meaning and secret of the non-violent non-co-operation of 1920.

"But I am not penning these lines so much to justify the action of the Working Committee as to appeal to Subhas Babu and his supporters to take the decision of the Working Committee in the right spirit and to submit to it, while it lasts. He has every right to appeal to the A.-I.C.C. against the decision. If he fails there, he can take the matter before the annual session of the Congress. And all this can be done without any bitterness and without imputing motives of the worse type to the members of the Working Committee. Why not be satisfied with the belief that the members have committed an error of judgement? I fancy that if a majority of the A.-I.C.C. members signify in writing their disapproval of the action of the Working Committee, the latter will gladly resign. By imputing motives, whenever there are differences of opinion, the Congressmen pull down the structure that has been built up by the patient labour of half a century. Indeed, even if a bad motive is suspected, it is better to refrain from imputing it, unless it can be proved beyond doubt. It is necessary for the sake of healthy public education that the leaders of public opinion should judge events and decisions on their merits.

"On the war resolution I had a conclusive defeat. I was invited to draft a resolution, and so was Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. I was proud of my draft, but my pride went before destruction. I saw that I could not carry my resolution unless I argued and pressed for it. But I had no such desire. We then listened to Jawaharlal's. And I at once admitted that it represented more truly than mine the country's opinion and even the Working Committee's, as a whole.

Mine was based upon out-and-out non-violence. If the Congress heartily believed in non-violence in its fullness, even as a policy, this was its testing time. But Congressmen, barring individual exceptions, do not believe in such non-violence. Those who do, believe that it is the right thing only for a fight against the Government for wresting power. But the Congress has no non-violent message for the world. I would fain believe that the Congress has such a message. The conclusion to both the resolutions need not have been radically different. But the motive power being different, the same conclusion would bear a different meaning in a different setting. In the face of the violence going on in India itself and in the face of the fact that Congress governments have been obliged to fall back upon military and police assistance, a declaration to the world of non-violence would have seemed a mockery. It would have carried no weight in India or with the world. Yet, to be true to myself, I could not draft any other resolution than I did.

"The fate, to which I was party, of my resolution proved the wisdom of my withdrawal of official connection with the Congress. I attend the Working Committee meetings not to identify myself with its resolutions or even its general policy. I attend in the pursuit of my mission of non-violence. So long as they want my attendance, I go there to emphasize non-violence in their acts and through them in those of Congressmen. We pursue the same goal. They, all of them, would go the whole length with me if they could, but they want to be true to themselves and to the country which they represent for the time being, even as I want to be true to myself. I know that the progress of non-violence is seemingly a terribly slow progress. But experience has taught me that it is the surest way to the common goal. There is deliverance neither for India nor for the world through clash of arms. Violence, even for the vindication of justice, is almost played out. With that belief I am content to plough a lonely furrow, if it is to be my lot that I have no co-sharer in the out-and-out belief in non-violence."

Intolerance was rampant. Subhas Bose, on his visit to Patna, was received with a black-flag demonstration. There was hurling of stones and shoes resulting in injuries to Swami Sahajanand, a kisan leader. President Rajendra Prasad condemned the act and Gandhi commented on it editorially. "The demonstrators showed an unworthy intolerance," he wrote. "Subhas Babu has a perfect

right to agitate against the action of the Working Committee and to canvass the public opinion against it. The disciplinary action frees Subhas Babu from any liability for restraint, save what every Congressman, pledged to the credal article of the constitution, is bound to put on himself. And that action should save him from any further demonstration of the public displeasure. And those who disapprove of the action of the Working Committee are certainly entitled to join any demonstration in favour of Subhas Babu. Unless this simple rule is observed, we shall never evolve democracy. In my opinion, the black-flag demonstrators have rendered a disservice to the cause of freedom. It is to be hoped that the Patna demonstration will prove to be the last of such acts by Congressmen. The question may be asked, 'How are those who endorse the action of the Working Committee and who disapprove of Subhas Babu's propaganda to show their disapproval?' Certainly not through black flags and disturbing of meetings in honour of Subhas Babu. But they can express their disapproval by holding counter meetings, not at the same time as the others but either before or after them. These meetings, for and against, should be regarded as means of educating the public opinion. Such education requires calm surroundings. Black flags, noisy slogans, and hurling of stones and shoes have no place in educative and instructive propaganda. Apropos of the ugly demonstration, I must refer to the complaint I have received that some Congress committees have threatened action against those Congressmen who may take part in receptions to Subhas Babu. I hope that the complaint has no foundation in fact. Such action will betray intolerance and may even be a sign of vindictiveness. Those Congressmen who dislike the Working Committee's action are bound to take part in receptions to him. It is impossible to gag them by threats of disciplinary measures. Such action loses its value, if it is resorted to on the slightest pretext. If it is true, as it is true, that no organization can do without such powers, it is equally true that no organization that makes free use of such powers has any right to exist. It cannot. It has then obviously lost the public backing."

The international situation worsened. War-clouds gathered on the European horizon. Hitler's ultimatum to Poland and the signing of a non-aggression pact between Germany and Russia created a grave situation. On September 3, 1939, England declared war on

Germany, the latter having invaded Poland. On that very day, the Viceroy, without previously consulting any of the Indian leaders or the legislatures, proclaimed that India was at war. And a number of ordinances followed the declaration "that a grave emergency exists whereby the security of India is threatened by war." In his broadcast speech, the Viceroy said that India was being called upon to "play a part worthy of her place among the great nations of the world."

The Viceroy invited the Indian leaders for consultation. Gandhi reached Simla on September 5 and issued a statement:

"At Delhi, as I was entraining for Kalka, a big crowd sang in perfect good humour to the worn-out refrain of 'Mahatma Gandhi-ki-jai', 'We do not want any understanding'. I had then my weekly silence. Therefore, I merely smiled. And those who were standing on the footboard returned the smile with their smile, whilst they were admonishing me not to have any understanding with the Viceroy. I had also a letter from a Congress committee giving me similar warning. Neither of these counsellors knew me. I did not need the warning to know my limitations. Apart from the Delhi demonstration and a Congress committee's warning, it is my duty to tell the public what happened at the interview with His Excellency the Viceroy.

"I knew that I had no authority to speak for any person except myself. I had no instructions whatsoever from the Working Committee in the matter. I had answered a telegraphic invitation and taken the first train I could catch. And what is more, with my irrepressible and out-and-out non-violence, I knew that I could not represent the national mind and I should cut a sorry figure, if I tried to do so. I told His Excellency as much. Therefore, there could be no question of any understanding or negotiation with me. Nor, I saw, had he sent for me to negotiate. I have returned from the Viceregal Lodge empty-handed, and without any understanding, open or secret. If there is to be any, it would be between the Congress and the Government.

"Having made my position *vis-a-vis* the Congress quite clear, I told His Excellency that my own sympathies were with England and France from the purely humanitarian standpoint. I also told him that I could not contemplate without being stirred to the very depth the destruction of London which had hitherto been regarded

as impregnable. And as I was picturing before him the Houses of Parliament and the Westminster Abbey and their possible destruction, I broke down. I have become disconsolate. In the secret of my heart, I am in perpetual quarrel with God that He should allow such things to go on. My non-violence seems almost impotent. But the answer comes at the end of the daily quarrel that neither God nor non-violence is impotent. Impotence is in men. I must try on without losing faith, even though I may break in the attempt.

"And so, as though in anticipation of the agony that was awaiting me, I sent on the 23rd July, from Abbottabad, the following letter to Herr Hitler:

"'Friends have been urging me to write to you for the sake of humanity. But I have resisted their request because of the feeling that any letter from me would be impertinence. Something tells me that I must not calculate and that I must make my appeal for whatever it may be worth. It is quite clear that you are today the one person in the world who can prevent a war, which may reduce humanity to the savage state. Must you pay that price for an object, however worthy it may appear to you to be? Will you listen to the appeal of one who has deliberately shunned the method of war not without considerable success? Anyway I anticipate your forgiveness, if I have erred in writing to you.'

"How I wish that even now he would listen to reason and the appeal from almost the whole of thinking mankind, not excluding the German people themselves. I must refuse to believe that the Germans contemplate with equanimity the evacuation of big cities like London for fear of destruction to be wrought by man's inhuman ingenuity. They cannot contemplate with equanimity such destruction of themselves and their own monuments. I am not just now thinking of India's deliverance. It will come, but what will it be worth if England and France fall, or if they come out victorious over Germany ruined and humbled?

"And yet it almost seems as if Herr Hitler knows no God but brute force and, as Mr. Chamberlain says, he will listen to nothing else. It is in the midst of this catastrophe without parallel that Congressmen and all other responsible Indians, individually and collectively, have to decide what part India is to play in this terrible drama."

On his return to Segaon on September 8, Gandhi received a cable from Paderewski, the aged Ex-President of Poland and celebrated pianist: "On behalf of a nation who is today defending the sacred right to remain free against a cruel and nameless tyranny, I appeal to you, as one of the greatest moral authorities of the world, to use your influence with your countrymen to gain for Poland their sympathy and friendship." To this Gandhi replied:

"My whole heart is with the Poles in the unequal struggle in which they are now engaged for the sake of saving their freedom. But I am painfully conscious of the fact that my word carries no power with it. I wish I had the power to stop this mad destruction that is going on in Europe. I belong to a country that has lost its independence and is struggling to be free from the yoke of the greatest imperialist power on earth. India has adopted the unique method of non-violence to regain its lost freedom. Though the method has proved its efficacy to an extent, the goal seems far off. All that I can, therefore, send to the brave Poles is my heartfelt prayer for the early termination of their fearful trial and for the grant of the required strength to bear the suffering whose very contemplation makes one shudder. Their cause is just and their victory certain. For God is always the upholder of justice."

Three days later, Gandhi wrote an editorial entitled "Source of my Sympathy":

"The statement made by me, just after my interview with the Viceroy has had a mixed reception. It has been described as sentimental twaddle by one critic and as a statesman-like pronouncement by another. There are variations between the two extremes. I suppose all the critics are right from their own standpoint, and all are wrong from the absolute standpoint which in this instance is that of the author. He wrote for nobody's satisfaction but his own. I abide by every word I have said in it. It has no political value, except what every humanitarian opinion may possess. Interrelation of ideas cannot be prevented.

"I have a spirited protest from a correspondent. It calls for a reply. I do not reproduce the letter, as parts of it I do not understand myself. But there is no difficulty in catching its drift. The main argument is this: 'If you shed tears over the possible destruction of the English Houses of Parliament and Westminster Abbey, have you no tears for the possible destruction of the monuments of

Germany? And why do you sympathize with England and France and not with Germany? Is not Hitler an answer to the ravishing of Germany by the allied powers during the last war? If you were a German and had the resourcefulness of Hitler, and were a believer in the doctrine of retaliation, as the whole world is, you would have done what Hitler is doing. Nazism may be bad. We do not know what it really is. The literature we get is one-sided. But I suggest to you that there is no difference between Chamberlain and Hitler. In Hitler's place, Chamberlain would not have acted otherwise. You have done an injustice to Hitler by comparing him with Chamberlain, to the former's disadvantage. Is England's record in India any better than Hitler's in another part of the world in similar circumstances? Hitler is but an infant pupil of the old imperialist England and France. I fancy that your emotion at the Viceregal Lodge had the better of your judgement.'

"No one perhaps, has described English misdeeds more forcibly, subject to truth, than I have. No one has resisted England more effectively, perhaps, than I have. And my desire for and power of resistance remain unabated. But there are seasons for speech and action, as there are seasons for silence and inaction.

"In the dictionary of satyagraha, there is no enemy. But as I have no desire to prepare a new dictionary for satyagrahis, I use the old words giving them a new meaning. A satyagrahi loves his so-called enemy even as his friend. He owns no enemy. As a satyagrahi, that is, a votary of ahimsa, I must wish well to England. My wishes regarding Germany were, and they still are, irrelevant for the moment. But I have said in a few words in my statement that I would not care to erect the freedom of my country on the remains of despoiled Germany. I should be as much moved by a contemplation of the possible destruction of Germany's monuments. Herr Hitler stands in no need of my sympathy. In assessing the present merits, the past misdeeds of England and the good deeds of Germany are irrelevant. Rightly or wrongly, and irrespective of what other powers have done before, under similar circumstances, I have come to the conclusion that Herr Hitler is responsible for the war. I do not judge his claim. It is highly probable that his right to incorporate Danzig in Germany is beyond question, if the Danzig Germans desire to give up their independent status. It may be that his claim to appropriate the Polish Corridor is a just

claim. My complaint is that he will not let the claim be examined by an independent tribunal. It is no answer to the rejection of the appeal for submission to arbitration that it came from interested quarters. Even a thief may conceivably make a correct appeal to his fellow thief. I think I am right in saying that the whole world was anxious that Herr Hitler should allow his demand to be examined by an impartial tribunal. If he succeeds in his design, his success will be no proof of the justness of his claim. It will be proof that the law of the jungle is still a great force in human affairs. It will be one more proof that though we humans have changed the form, we have not changed the manners of the beast.

"I hope it is clear to my critics that my sympathy for England and France is not a result of momentary emotion or, in cruder language, of hysteria. It is derived from the never-drying fountain of non-violence which my breast has nursed for fifty years. I claim no infallibility for my judgement. All I claim is that my sympathy for England and France is reasoned. I invite those who accept the premises on which my sympathy is based to join me. What shape it should take is another matter. Alone I can but pray. And so I told His Excellency that my sympathy had no concrete value in the face of the concrete destruction that is facing those who are directly engaged in the war."

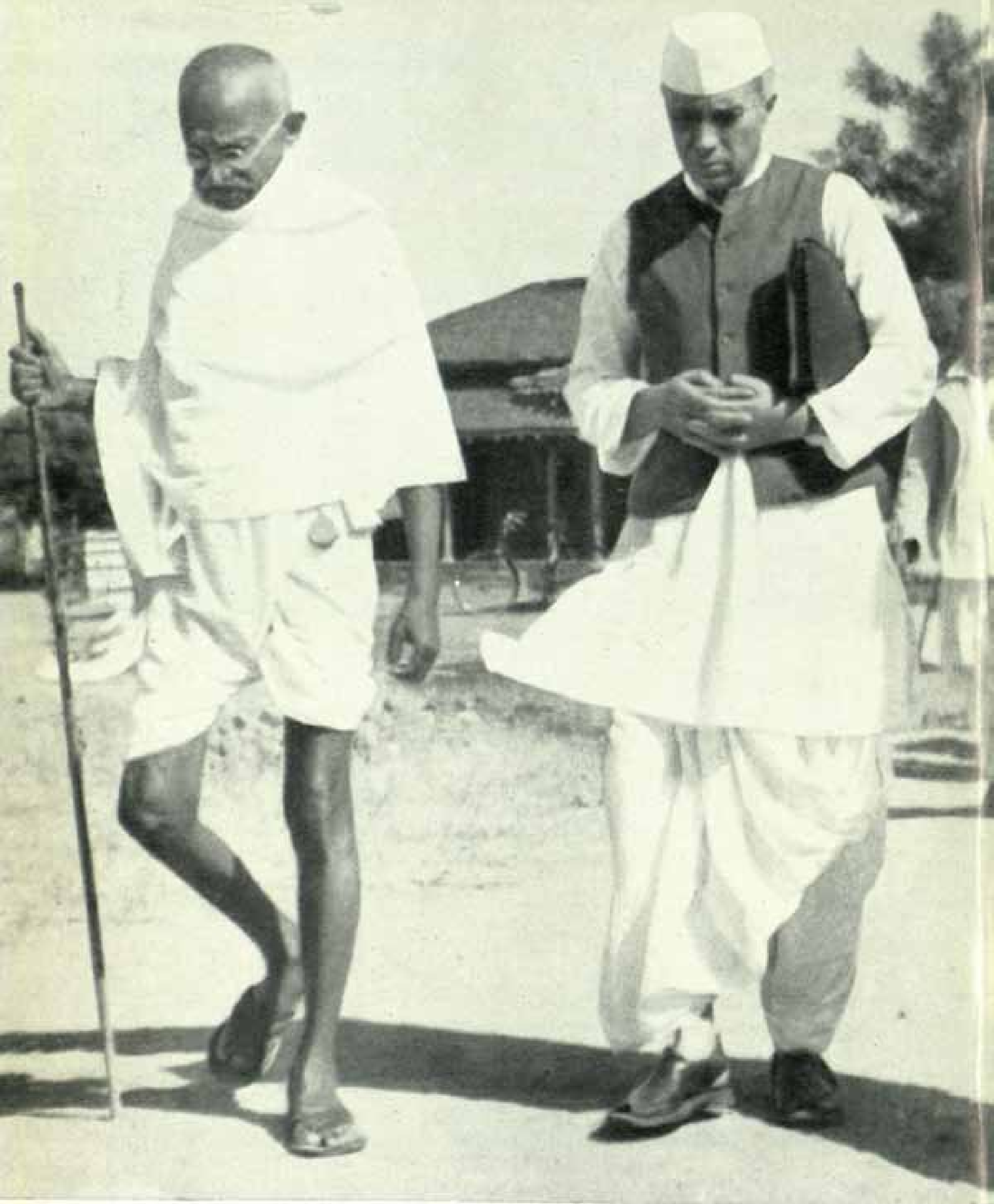
The Working Committee of the All-India Hindu Mahasabha met on September 10. It gave its general support to Britain and recognized that the task of defending India from any military attack was "of common concern to the British Government as well as to the Indians". With a view to make such co-operation "effective", the Mahasabha urged the introduction of responsible Government at the Centre, revision of the Communal Award and enlistment of more Hindus in the army.

The Muslim League came out with its war resolution, passed on September 18. It expressed its appreciation of Lord Linlithgow's action in inviting Jinnah. The resolution then criticized and condemned the federal scheme, the working of provincial autonomy which, during its two years of experiment, "has resulted wholly in a permanent communal majority and the domination of the Hindus over the Muslim minority, whose life and liberty, property and honour, are in danger and even their religious rights and culture are being assailed and annihilated every day under the Government



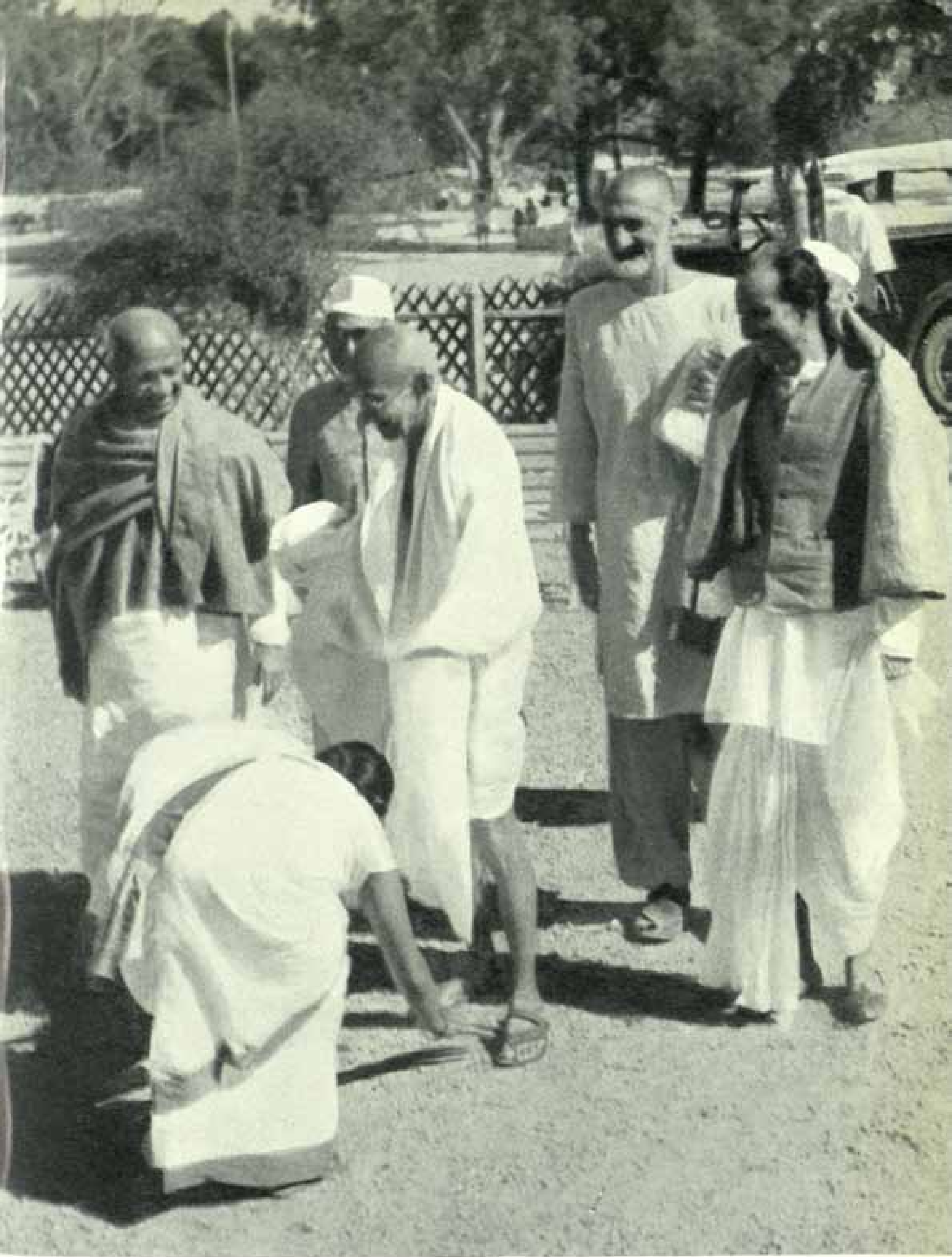
From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Gandhi on the way to see the Viceroy, Simla, September 5, 1939



From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Gandhi and Nehru leaving Segaon to attend the Working Committee meeting at Wardha, September 1939



From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Gandhi arrives at Wardha for the Working Committee meeting, September 1939

मगनवाड़ी
वर्धा (मध्य प्रांत)

MAGANWADI
WARDHA (C.P.)

9-9-39

My dear Diwakar

Of course ahimsa can be organised. But the method of organising ahimsa is wholly different from that of organising himsa. That I have failed badly shows my own unworthiness. My sadhana is incomplete. This does not cause despair in me. I must have and do have infinite patience. Faith without patience is an empty thing.

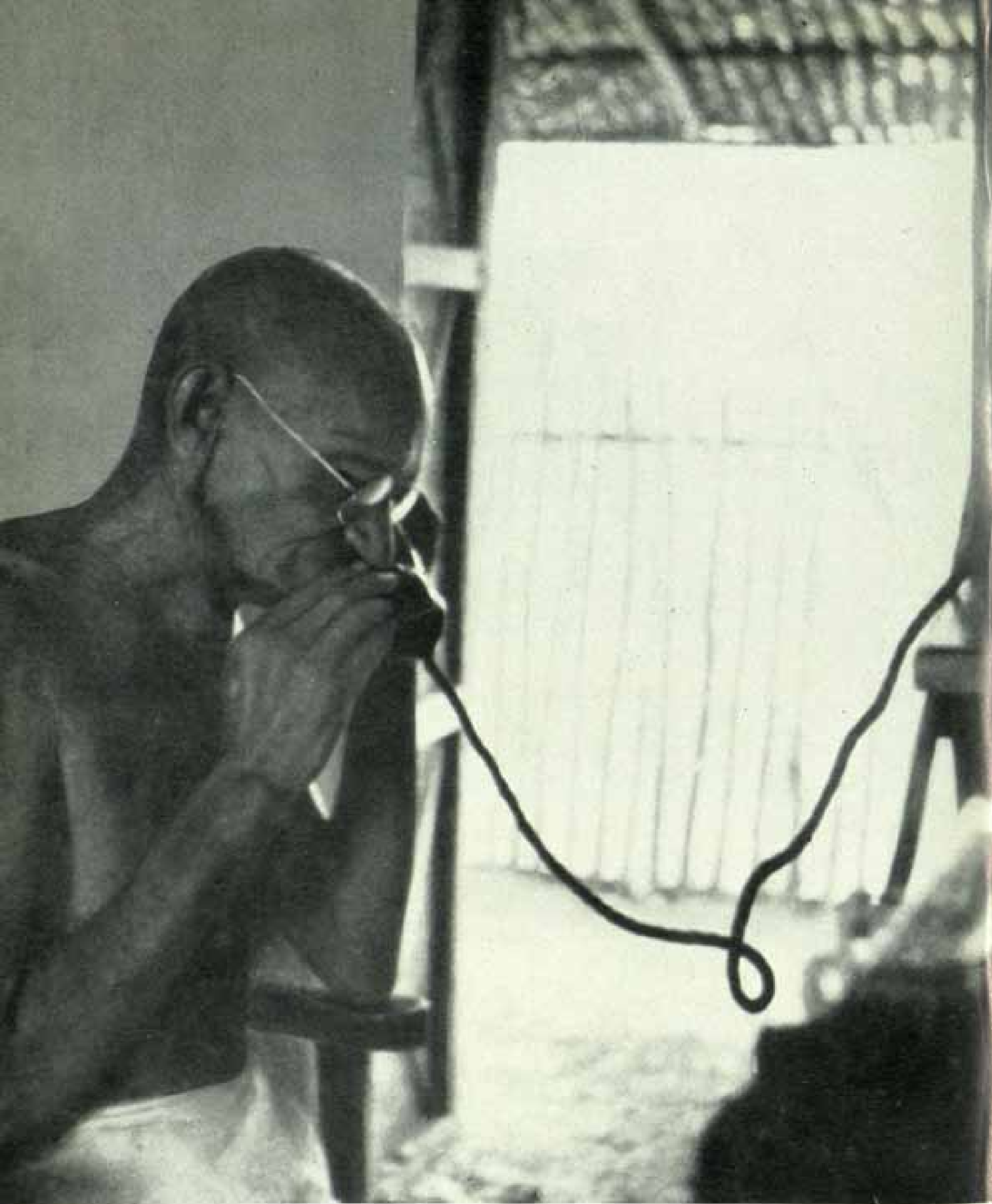
What our conduct in terms of non-violence should be you will see developing in Harijan.

Yours
Bapu

Courtesy : R. R. Diwakar

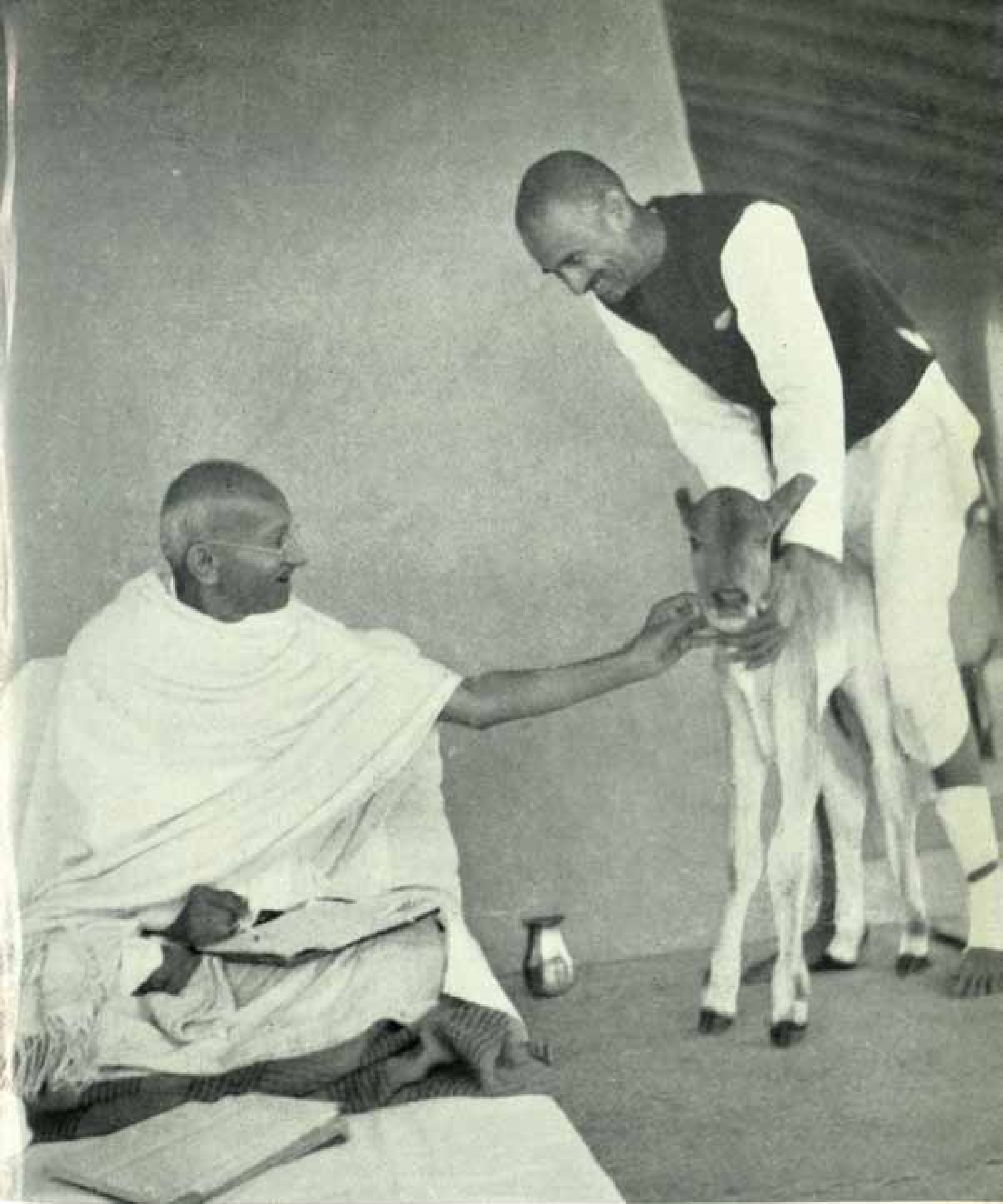
Gandhi's letter to Diwakar on organizing ahimsa, dated Segaon, September 9, 1939

Gandhi at work, Segaon, September 1939 *From Sumati Morarjee Collection*
With the volunteers, Segaon, September 1939 *Photograph : Kanu Gandhi*



Photograph : Kanu Gandhi

Gandhi at the telephone, Segaon, 1939



Photograph : Kanu Gandhi

Gandhi patting a newly born calf, Segaon, September 1939

A MICKEY MOUSE OF A MAN



Courtesy : The "C. & M. GAZETTE."

Mahatma Gandhi's 70th birthday was celebrated throughout India on October 2. Mrs. Sarojini Naidu paid a Broadcast tribute from Bombay.

Courtesy : Civil and Military Gazette

A caricature of Gandhi on his seventieth birthday, October 1939

in various provinces." The resolution stated that "Muslim India" always stood against the "exploitation of the people of India", of their favouring "a free India", while they were opposed to the "domination of the Hindu majority over the Muslims and other minorities and the vassalization of Muslim India." The resolution warned the British Government that it could count on the Muslim support only on two conditions: Muslims must be given "justice and fair play" in the Congress Provinces, and no assurances must be given as to the constitutional advance, nor any new constitution framed, without the consent and the approval of the League, "the only organization that can speak on behalf of Muslim India".

The Liberal Federation, the All-India Christian Conference and the princes stood for unconditional assistance to the Government. And among other expressions of opinion, a statement was issued on September 8, signed by Tagore and others, calling upon India to stand by Britain and resist the disastrous policy of domination by force. "No Indian would desire that England should lose the battle for freedom she is fighting today."

The Working Committee of the Congress met in September at Wardha and discussed for a week the situation created by the outbreak of the war. Jinnah was invited to participate in the discussions but he would not come owing to his "previous commitment". Subhas Bose, Aney, Narendra Deva and Jayaprakash Narayan were present by special invitations. Jawaharlal Nehru, who had not joined the committee after the Calcutta imbroglio, and was away in China, returned in time to participate in the meeting. Gandhi was present throughout the session of the committee.

On September 14, after full four days' discussion, the Working Committee issued a long statement drafted by Jawaharlal Nehru, extracts from which ran as follows:

"The British Government have declared India as a belligerent country, promulgated ordinances, passed the Government of India Act Amending Bill, and taken many other far-reaching measures which affect the Indian people vitally, and circumscribe and limit the powers and the activities of the provincial governments. This has been done without the consent of the people of India whose declared wishes in such matters have been deliberately ignored by the British Government. The Working Committee must take the gravest view of these developments.

"The Congress has repeatedly declared its entire disapproval of the ideology and practice of fascism and Nazism and their glorification of war and violence and the suppression of the human spirit. It has seen in fascism and Nazism, intensification of the principle of imperialism against which the Indian people have struggled for many years. The Working Committee must, therefore, condemn unhesitatingly the latest aggression of the Nazi Government in Germany against Poland and sympathize with those who resist it.

"The Congress has further laid down that the issue of war and peace for India must be decided by the Indian people, and no outside authority can impose this decision upon them, nor can the Indian people permit their resources to be exploited for imperialist ends. If co-operation is desired . . . (it) must be between equals by mutual consent for a cause which both consider to be worthy . . . India cannot associate herself in a war said to be for democratic freedom when that very freedom is denied to her, and such limited freedom as she possesses taken away from her.

"The Working Committee are aware that the Governments of Great Britain and France have declared that they are fighting for democracy and freedom and to put an end to aggression. But the history of the recent past is full of examples, showing the constant divergence between the spoken word, the ideals proclaimed, and the real motives and objectives.

"If this war is to defend the *status quo*, imperialist possessions, colonies, vested interests and privilege, then India can have nothing to do with it. If, however, the issue is democracy and a world order based on democracy, then India is intensely interested in it. And if Great Britain fights for the maintenance and extension of democracy then she must necessarily end imperialism in her own possessions, establish full democracy in India, and the Indian people must have the right of self-determination by framing their own constitution through a constituent assembly without any external interference, and must guide their own policy . . . The crisis that has overtaken Europe is not of Europe only but of humanity and will not pass like other crises or wars, leaving the essential structure of the present-day world intact. It is likely to refashion the world for good or ill. India is the crux of the problem, for India has been the outstanding example of modern imperialism, and no refashioning of the world can succeed, which ignores this vital problem. With her vast

resources, India must play an important part in any scheme of world reorganization. But India can only do so as a free nation, whose energies have been released to work for this great end. Freedom today is indivisible and every attempt to retain the imperialist domination in any part of the world will lead inevitably to a fresh disaster.

"The Working Committee have noted that many rulers of the Indian states have offered their services and resources and have expressed their desire to support the cause of democracy in Europe. If they must make their professions in favour of democracy abroad, the committee would suggest that their first concern should be the introduction of democracy within their own states in which today undiluted autocracy reigns supreme. The British Government in India is more responsible for this autocracy than the rulers themselves, as has been made painfully evident during the past year. This policy is the very negation of democracy and of the new world order for which Great Britain claims to be fighting in Europe.

"As the Working Committee view past events, they fail to find any attempt to advance the cause of democracy or self-determination, or any evidence that the present war declarations of the British Government are being, or are going to be, acted upon. The committee cannot associate themselves or offer any co-operation in a war which is conducted on imperialist lines and which is meant to consolidate imperialism in India and elsewhere. In view, however, of the gravity of the occasion and the fact that the pace of events during last few days has often been swifter than the working of men's minds, the committee desire to take no final decision at this stage, so as to allow for the full elucidation of the issues at stake, the real objectives aimed at, and the position of India in the present and in the future. The Working Committee, therefore, invite the British Government to declare in unequivocal terms what their war aims are in regard to democracy and imperialism and the new order that is envisaged, in particular, how these aims are going to apply to India and to be given effect in the present. The real test of any declaration is its application in the present, for it is the present that will govern action today, and also give shape to the future.

"The Working Committee wish to declare that the Indian people have no quarrel with the German people or the Japanese people or

any other people. And they do not look forward to a victory of one people over another or to a dictated peace, but to a victory of real democracy for all the people of all countries and a world freed from the nightmare of violence and imperialist oppression.

"The committee earnestly appeal to the Indian people to end all internal conflicts and controversy, and in this grave hour of peril, to keep in readiness and hold together as a united nation, calm of purpose and determined to achieve the freedom of India within the larger freedom of the world."

The Working Committee appointed a sub-committee consisting of Nehru, Azad and Patel to deal with the questions arising out of the changing war situation. The full text of the Congress statement was broadcast by the Moscow radio. Commenting on the Congress manifesto, Gandhi wrote on September 15:

"The Working Committee's statement on the world crisis took four days before it received final shape. Every member expressed his opinion freely on the draft that was, at the committee's invitation, prepared by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. I was sorry to find myself alone in thinking that whatever support was to be given to the British should be given unconditionally. This could only be done on a purely non-violent basis. But the committee had a tremendous responsibility to discharge. It could not take the purely non-violent attitude. It felt that the nation had not yet imbibed the non-violent spirit requisite for the possession of the strength which disdains to take advantage of the difficulty of the opponent. But in stating the reasons for its conclusions, the committee desired to show the greatest consideration for the English.

"The author of the statement is an artist. Though he cannot be surpassed in his implacable opposition to imperialism in any shape or form, he is a friend of the English people. Indeed, he is more English than Indian in his thoughts and make-up. He is often more at home with Englishmen than with his own countrymen. And he is a humanitarian in the sense that he reacts to every wrong, no matter where perpetrated. Though, therefore, he is an ardent nationalist, his nationalism is enriched by his fine internationalism. Hence the statement is a manifesto addressed not only to his own countrymen, not only to the British Government and the British people, but is addressed also to the nations of the world including those that are exploited like India. He has compelled India, through

the Working Committee, to think not merely of her own freedom, but of the freedom of all the exploited nations of the world.

"The same time that the committee passed the statement, it appointed a board of his choice, with himself as chairman, to deal with the situation as it may develop from time to time.

"I hope that the statement will receive the unanimous support of all the parties among Congressmen. The strongest among them will not find any lack of strength in it. And at this supreme hour in the history of the nation, the Congress should believe that there will be no lack of strength in action, if action becomes necessary. It will be a pity, if Congressmen engage in petty squabbles and party strife. If anything big or worthy is to come out of the committee's action, the undivided and unquestioned loyalty of every Congressman is obsolutely necessary. I hope that all other political parties and all communities will join the committee's demand for a clear declaration of their policy from the British Government with such corresponding action, as it is possible amidst martial conditions. Recognition of India, and for that matter of all those who are under the British Crown, as free and independent nations, seems to me to be the natural corollary of the British professions about democracy. If the war means anything less, the co-operation of dependent nations can never be honestly voluntary, unless it were based on non-violence.

"All that is required is a mental revolution on the part of British statesmen. To put it still more plainly, all that is required is honest action to implement the declaration of faith in democracy made from British platforms. Will Great Britain have an unwilling India dragged into the war or a willing ally co-operating with her in the prosecution of a defence of true democracy? The Congress support will mean the greatest moral asset in favour of England and France. The Congress fights not with violent but with non-violent means however imperfect, however crude the non-violence may be."

On Trial

1939

THE VICEROY again invited more than fifty of India's leaders including Gandhi, Rajendra Prasad, Nehru, Bose, Patel and Jinnah for an interview. On the train to Simla, on September 25, 1939, Gandhi wrote on "Conundrums":

"Thus asks a well-known Congressman: '(1) What is your personal attitude towards this war consistent with non-violence? (2) Is it the same as or different from your attitude during the last war? (3) How could you with your non-violence actively associate with and help the Congress, whose policy is based on violence in the present crisis? (4) And what is your concrete plan based on non-violence to oppose or prevent this war?'

"These questions conclude a long friendly complaint about my seeming inconsistencies or inscrutability. Both are old complaints, perfectly justified from the standpoint of the complainants, but wholly unjustified from my own. Therefore, my complainants and I must agree to differ. Only this let me say. At the time of writing I never think of what I have said before. My aim is not to be consistent with my previous statements on a given question, but to be consistent with truth, as it may present itself to me at a given moment. The result has been that I have grown from truth to truth; I have saved my memory an undue strain; and what is more, whenever I have been obliged to compare my writing even of fifty years ago with the latest, I have discovered no inconsistency between the two. But friends who observe inconsistency will do well to take the meaning that my latest writing may yield, unless, of course, they prefer the old. But before making the choice, they should try to see if there is not an underlying and abiding consistency between the two seeming inconsistencies.

"So far as my inscrutability is concerned, friends should take my assurance that there is never any attempt on my part to suppress

my thought when it is relevant. Sometimes it arises from my desire to be brief. And sometimes it must be due to my own ignorance of the subject on which I may be called upon to give an opinion.

"To give a typical instance, a friend, between whom and me there never is any mental reservation, thus writes in anguish rather than anger: 'In the not-improbable event of India being a theatre of war, is Gandhi prepared to advise his own countrymen to bare their breasts to the enemy's sword? A little while ago, I would have pledged my word that he would do so, but I am not confident any more.'

"I can only assure him that notwithstanding my recent writings he can retain his confidence that I would give the same advice as he expects I would have given before, or as I gave to the Czechs or the Abyssinians. My non-violence is made of stern stuff. It is firmer than the firmest metal known to the scientists. Yet, alas, I am painfully conscious of the fact that it has still not attained its native firmness. If it had, God would have shown me the way to deal with the many local cases of violence that I helplessly witness daily. This is said not in arrogance, but in the certain knowledge of the power of perfect non-violence to be underestimated in order to cover my limitations or weaknesses.

"Now for a few lines in answer to the foregoing questions.

"1. My own personal reaction towards this war is one of greater horror than even before. I was not so disconsolate before, as I am today. But the greater horror would prevent me today from becoming the self-appointed recruiting sergeant that I had become during the last war. And yet, strange as it may appear, my sympathies are wholly with the allies. Willynilly, this war is resolving itself into one between such democracy, as the West has evolved, and totalitarianism, as it is typified in Herr Hitler. Though the part that Russia is playing is painful, let us hope that the unnatural combination will result in a happy, though unintended, fusion whose shape no one can foretell. Unless the allies suffer demoralization, of which there is not the slightest indication, this war may be used to end all wars, at any rate of the virulent type that we see today. I have the hope that India, distraught though she is with internal dissensions, will play an effective part in ensuring the desired end and the spread of cleaner democracy than hitherto. This will undoubtedly depend upon how the Working Committee

will ultimately act in the real tragedy that is being played on the world stage. We are both actors in and spectators of the drama. My line is cast. Whether I act as a humble guide of the Working Committee, or, if I may use the same expression without offence, of the Government, my guidance will be for the deliberate purpose of taking either or both along the path of non-violence, be the step ever so imperceptible. It is plain that I cannot force the pace either way. I can only use such power as God may endow my head or heart with for the moment.

"2. I think that I have covered the second question in answering the first.

"3. There are degrees of violence as of non-violence. The Working Committee has not wilfully departed from the policy of non-violence. It could not honestly accept the real implications of non-violence. It felt that the vast mass of Congressmen had never clearly understood that, in the event of danger from without, they were to defend the country by non-violent means. All that they had learnt truly was that they could put up a successful fight, on the whole non-violent, against the British Government. Congressmen have had no training in the use of non-violence in the other fields. Thus, for example, the Congressmen had not yet discovered a sure method of dealing successfully in a non-violent manner with communal riots or goondaism. The argument is final, inasmuch as it is based on actual experience. I would not serve the cause of non-violence, if I deserted my best co-workers, because they could not follow me in an extended application of non-violence. I, therefore, remain with them in the faith that their departure from the non-violent method will be confined to the narrowest field and will be temporary.

"4. I have no ready-made concrete plan. For me too, this is a new field. Only I have no choice as to the means. It must always be purely non-violent, whether I am closeted with the members of the Working Committee or with the Viceroy. Therefore, what I am doing is itself part of the concrete plan. More will be revealed to me from day to day, as all my plans always have been. The famous non-co-operation resolution came to me within less than twenty-four hours of the meeting of the A.-I.C.C. at which it was moved in Calcutta in 1920; and so did practically the Dandi march. The foundation of the first civil resistance under the then known name

of passive resistance was laid by accident at a meeting of Indians in Johannesburg in 1906, convened for the purpose of finding the means of combating the anti-Asiatic measure of those days. I had gone to the meeting with no preconceived resolution. It was born at the meeting. And the creation is still expanding. But assuming that God had endowed me with full powers—which He never does—I would at once ask the English to lay down arms, free all their vassals, take pride in being called 'little Englanders', and defy all the totalitarians of the world to do their worst. Englishmen will then die unresistingly and go down to history as the heroes of non-violence. I would further invite Indians to co-operate with Englishmen in this godly martyrdom. It will be an indissoluble partnership drawn up in letters of the blood of their own bodies, not of their so-called enemies. But I have no such general power. Non-violence is a plant of slow growth. It grows imperceptibly but surely. And even at the risk of being misunderstood, I must act in obedience to 'the still small voice.' "

On the same day Gandhi wrote a note on "Is India a Military Country?" It was in reply to a broadcast talk of the Commander-in-Chief:

"I must wholly, though respectfully, dissent from the view that India is a military country. And I thank God that it is not. It may be that the Commander-in-Chief has a special meaning for the term which I do not know. Or is it that his India is composed of only the defence forces under his command? For me, the defence forces are of the least importance in the make-up of the nation. I need not be reminded that life would be in constant peril, if the forces were withdrawn. The forces notwithstanding, life is not free from peril. There are riots, there are murders, there are dacoities, there are raids. The defence forces avail little in all these perils, and they generally act after the mischief is done. But the gallant Commander-in-Chief looks at things as a soldier. I and, with me, the millions are untouched by the military spirit. From ages past India has had a military caste in numbers wholly insignificant. But that caste has had little to do with the millions. This, however, is not the occasion for examining its contribution to the making of India. All I want to state, with the utmost emphasis at my command, is that the description of India as a military country is wrong. Of all the countries in the world India is the least military.

Although I have failed with the Working Committee in persuading them, at this supreme moment, to declare their undying faith in non-violence as the only sovereign remedy for saving mankind from destruction, I have not lost the hope that the masses will refuse to bow to the Moloch of war but they will rely upon their own capacity for suffering to save their country's honour. How has the undoubted military valour of Poland served her against the superior forces of Germany and Russia? Would Poland unarmed have fared any worse if it had met the challenge of these combined forces with the resolution to face death without retaliation? Would the invading forces have taken a heavier toll from an infinitely more valorous Poland? It is highly probable that their essential nature would have made them desist from a wholesale slaughter of the innocents.

"Of all the organizations of the world, the Congress is the best fitted to show it the better way, indeed the only way, to the true life. Its non-violent experiment will have been in vain if, when India wakes up from the present fear, she does not show to the world the way of deliverance from the blood bath. The criminal waste of life and wealth that is now going on will not be the last if India does not play her natural part by showing that human dignity is best preserved not by developing the capacity to deal destruction but by refusing to retaliate. And I have no manner of doubt that if it is possible to train the millions in the black art of violence which is the law of the beast, it is more possible to train them in the white art of non-violence which is the law of regenerate man. Any way, if the Commander-in-Chief will look beyond the defence forces, he will discover that the real India is not military but peace-loving.

"Nor do I contemplate without uneasiness the prospect of Indian soldiers, trained after the modern manner, taking the motor spirit to their homes. Speed is not the end of life. Man sees more and lives more truly by walking to his duty."

After seeing the Viceroy on September 26, Gandhi entrained for Wardha. On the way he wrote on "Hindu-Muslim Unity":

"During my last journey to Simla, my attention was drawn to the bitterness with which, it was alleged, the Muslim League and its doings were being criticized in some of the Congress organs. I have not seen any such criticism for the simple reason that I do not

see the newspapers except for a few moments daily. But if there is any ground for such complaint, it should certainly be removed. The Muslim League is a great organization. Its president was at one time an ardent Congressman. He was the rising hope of the Congress. His battle with Lord Willingdon cannot be forgotten. The Jinnah Hall of the Bombay Congress is a standing monument of the president's labours for the Congress, and a mark of Congressmen's generous appreciation of his services. The Muslim League contains many members who were whole-heartedly with the Congress during the memorable Khilafat days. I refuse to think that these erstwhile comrades can be as bitter in their hearts towards their fellow workers of yesterday, as their speeches and writings of today will show. It is, therefore, wrong of Congressmen and the Congress organs if they are bitter against the League or its individual members. The Congress policy of non-violence should put an easy restraint upon the speeches, writings and actions of Congressmen in their dealings with the League and its members. They must resolutely believe and hope that sooner or later, and sooner rather than later, there is to be communal unity, not superficial but real and lasting.

"Zahid, the late Big Brother's son, who met me in Simla said, 'We must not quarrel. Blood is thicker than water. We are of the same blood. You must work for unity.' Other Muslim friends who met me during the journey said: 'You must bring about unity. You alone can do it. Heaven help us if unity is not achieved in your lifetime.' I have a similar message from a great Muslim.

"All this may flatter my vanity. But I know that it does humble me. I wish God had given me power to realize the hope genuinely expressed by so many Muslim friends. I assure them that not a day passes but I think of and pray for the unity. It is neither for want of will nor effort that I have to be a helpless witness of so much bitterness and quarrelling between the two. I have not lost hope that I shall live to see real unity established between not only the Hindus and Muslims, but all the communities that make India a nation. If I know the way to achieve it today, I know that I have the will and the strength to take it, however difficult or thorny it may be. And I know too that the shortest and the surest way lies through non-violence. Some Muslim friends tell me that Muslims will never subscribe to unadulterated non-violence. With them, they

say, violence is as lawful and necessary as non-violence. The use of either depends upon circumstances. It does not need the Koranic authority to justify the lawfulness of both. That is the well-known path the world has traversed through the ages. There is no such thing as unadulterated violence in the world. But I have heard it from many Muslim friends that the Holy Koran teaches the use of non-violence. It regards forbearance as superior to vengeance. The very word Islam means peace, which is non-violence. Badshah Khan, a staunch Muslim, has accepted out-and-out non-violence as his creed. It would be no answer to say that he does not live up to his creed, even as I know to my shame that I don't. If there is difference in our actions, the difference is not one of kind, it is of degree. But the argument about non-violence in the Holy Koran is an interpolation, not necessary for my thesis.

"I hold that for the full play of non-violence, only one party need believe in it. Indeed, if both the parties believe in it and live up to it, there is no appreciation or demonstration of it. To live at peace with one another is the most natural thing to do. But neither party gains the merit that the exercise of non-violence carries with it. Unfortunately, at the present moment, those Hindus who do not know the use of violence, though they have it in their hearts, are sorry for their incapacity and would fain learn the trick—I won't call it the art—of violence, so as to be able to match what they describe as Muslim violence. And if peace is to be brought about by both parties being equally matched in the use of violence, both offensive and defensive, I know that that peace will not come in my lifetime and, if it came, I should not care to be witness of it. It will be an armed peace to be broken at any moment. Such has been the peace in Europe. Is not the present war enough to make one sick of such peace?

"Muslim friends, who hope much from me, will perhaps now recognize my agony for the unattainment of peace in spite of the travail that I have gone through and am still going through. They should also see that my principal work lies through teaching at least the Hindus to learn the art of non-violence unless I can bring the Muslims to the position the Ali brothers and their associates took up during the Khilafat days. They used to say: 'Even if our Hindu brethren cut us to pieces, yet will we love them. They are our kith and kin.' The late Maulana Abdul Bari used to say: 'The

Muslims of India will never forget the ungrudging and unconditional support that Hindus have given to us at this critical period of our history.' I am sure that both the Hindus and the Muslims of those days are the same today that they were then. But times have changed and with them have changed our manners. I have no shadow of a doubt that our hearts will meet some day. And what seems impossible today for us, God will make possible tomorrow. For that day I work, live and pray."

As soon as he reached Segaon, he was shown an advance copy of Reuter's summary of the Lords' debate on India. Lord Zetland, the Secretary of State for India, had characterized the Congress demand as unfortunate. Gandhi said: "I was unprepared for the old familiar flavour in the debate in the shape of drawing comparisons unflattering to the Congress. I maintain that the Congress is an all-inclusive body. And without offence to anybody, it can be said of it that it is the one body that has represented for over half a century, without a rival, the vast masses of India, irrespective of class or creed. It has not a single interest opposed to that of the Musalmans or that of the people of the states. Recent years have shown unmistakably that the Congress represents beyond doubt the interests of the people of the states. And it is that organization which has asked for a clear definition of the British intentions. If the British are fighting for the freedom of all, then their representatives have to state in the clearest possible terms that the freedom of India is necessarily included in the war aim. The content of such freedom can only be decided by the Indians and them alone. Surely it is wrong for Lord Zetland to complain as he does, though in gentle terms, that the Congress should at this critical juncture, when Great Britain is engaged in a life and death struggle, ask for a clear declaration of the British intentions. I suggest that the Congress has done nothing strange, or less than honourable, in asking for such a declaration. Only a free India's help is of value. And the Congress has every right to know that it can go to the people and tell them that at the end of the war India's status as an independent country is as much assured as that of Great Britain. As a friend of the British, I, therefore, appeal to the English statesmen that they will forget the old language of the imperialists and open a new chapter for all those, who have been held under the imperial bondage."

Every line of his writings was scrutinized and he was inundated with searching letters. Commenting on "The Unbridgeable Gulf", Gandhi wrote:

"The following letter comes from a friend: 'In the *Harijan* you wrote: "Speed is not the end of life. Man sees more and lives more truly by walking to his duty." Then you subscribe: "On the train to Simla." I am surprised that with all the fund of humour you possess, you could not see how the words "on the train to Simla" pointed the finger of ridicule to the statement: "Man sees more and lives more truly by walking to his duty." '

"Time was when this friend used to believe in my method and was a valuable supporter. Somehow or other, I have now fallen from grace. He should have had no difficulty in following the rich humour behind the writing which he exposes to ridicule. But I must deprive the ridicule of its sting by informing my friend that I was in my senses when I wrote the note referred to. I might easily have avoided the exact place where it was penned. But I wanted to add point to my remark and to discover to the reader the vast gulf that separates me from my ideal. Let the waverers take heart from the fact that though my note containing the false contradiction of the ideal has provided my friend with mirth, I have got the credit for trying my best to live up to the ideals I may profess. If I am to make an ever-increasing approach to my ideal, I must let the world see my weaknesses and failures, so that I may be saved from hypocrisy, and so that even for very shame I would try my utmost to realize the ideal. The contradiction pointed out by the friend also shows that between the ideal and practice there always must be an unbridgeable gulf. The ideal will cease to be one, if it becomes possible to realize it. The pleasure lies in making the effort, not in its fulfilment. For, in our progress towards the goal, we ever see more and more enchanting scenery.

"Coming, however, to the friend's jibe, let me tell him and the reader that I could pen those lines because it is never a pleasure to me to travel by motor or rail or even a cart. It is always a pleasure to walk. Nor should I mind in the least, if every rail was removed and men, except the sick and the maimed, had to walk to their businesses. I can not only imagine but am working for a civilization in which possession of a car will be considered no merit and the railways will find no place. It would not be for me an unhappy

event, if the world became once more as large as it used to be at one time. *Hind Swaraj* was written in 1909. Since then it has undergone many editions and has been translated in many languages of the world. I was asked last year by Shrimati Sophia Wadia to write a foreword for the edition that she was bringing out. I, therefore, had the pleasure of having to re-read it carefully. The reader may know that I could not revise a single idea. I had no desire to revise the language. It is a fair translation of the original in Gujarati. The key to understand that incredibly simple—so simple as to be regarded foolish—booklet is to realize that it is not an attempt to go back to the so-called ignorant Dark Ages. But it is an attempt to see beauty in voluntary simplicity, poverty and slowness. I have pictured that as my ideal. I shall never reach it myself and hence cannot expect the nation to do so. But the modern rage for variety, for flying through the air, for multiplicity of wants, etc., have no fascination for me. They deaden the inner being in us. The giddy heights, which man's ingenuity is attempting, take us away from our Maker, Who is nearer to us than the nails are to the flesh which they cover.

"Therefore, even whilst I am travelling at the rate of forty miles per hour, I am conscious that it is a necessary evil, and that my best work is to be done in little Segaon containing seven hundred souls, and in the neighbouring villages to which I can walk. But being a highly practical man, I do not avoid railway travelling or motoring for the mere sake of looking foolishly consistent. Let the reader know that, during the hurricane Harijan tour Thakkar Bapa had arranged for me, I had gently suggested to him that I would like to do the whole of the year's tour on foot. He would not listen. And we had violent demonstrations during the tour. Twice or oftener we escaped serious injury and it might have been even death. When we reached Puri, there was fear of bloodshed. So I put my foot down and insisted on performing the remaining pilgrimage on foot. Thakkar Bapa readily consented. Well, the demonstrators, who were prepared only for demonstrations by rail and motor-car, could not overtake the pilgrims who covered only eight to ten miles per day in two stages. This was the most effective part of our tour. The awakening was solid. Our experiences were rich. And the demonstrators had no excitement left for them. They had no desire to kill me in cold blood. They were out for

sensations. But sensations are not to be had with non-violent men and women walking to their mission without any fear of man and in the certain knowledge of having God as their infallible guide and protector."

Gandhi was nearing seventy-one. The eyes of the world were directed towards him. On October 2, he was presented a birthday volume edited by Radhakrishnan. "To this great soul in a beggar's garb," said Tagore, "it is our united privilege to offer felicitations on his birthday." Commenting on the birthday volume, Gandhi wrote under "Thanks":

"Sir Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan has made much of my seventy-first birthday. He has sent me his book of praises from friends, known and unknown to me. With it, he has been good enough to send also a covering letter of further appreciation. I do not know when I shall have the time to go through all the tributes collected in the volume. I can only pray that God may give me the capacity to live up to the contributors' picture of me, whatever it may be. One warning I should like to issue to my admirers. Some would like to erect my statues in the public places, some others would have portraits, yet others would proclaim my birthday as a public holiday. C. Rajagopalachari knows me well and, therefore, he has wisely vetoed the proposal to declare my birthday as a public holiday. These are the days of dissensions and discord. I should feel deeply humiliated, if my name became in any way an occasion for accentuating them. Avoidance of such opportunity is a real service to the country and me. Statues and photographs and the like have no place today. The only praise I would like and would treasure is the promotion of the activities to which my life is dedicated. He or she, who does a single act to produce communal harmony, or to destroy the demon of untouchability, or to advance the cause of the villages, brings me real joy and peace. I am nothing without or apart from my activities."

The Congress Working Committee's statement of September 14 was discussed at the meeting of the A.-I.C.C. held at Wardha on October 9. For two days it was debated in the course of which twenty-two different amendments were moved, mostly by the leftists, of whom the communists were most vociferous, calling for a more aggressive policy against the Government. The following resolution was passed by the A.-I.C.C. on the war crisis:

"The Congress has been guided throughout by its objective of achieving the independence of the Indian people and the establishment of a free democratic state in India, wherein the rights and the interests of all minorities are preserved and safeguarded. The means it has adopted in its struggle and activities have been peaceful and legitimate, and it has looked upon war and violence with horror and as opposed to progress and civilization. In particular, the Congress has declared itself opposed to all imperialist wars and to the domination of one country over another.

"In spite of the repeated declarations of the Congress in regard to war, the British Government have declared India a belligerent country without the consent of the Indian people. The All-India Congress Committee, however, does not wish to take any decision precipitously and without giving every opportunity for the war and peace aims of the British Government to be clarified, with particular reference to India . . . While the committee condemns fascism and Nazi aggression, it is convinced that peace and freedom can only be established and preserved by an extension of democracy to all the colonial countries and by the application of the principle of self-determination to them, so as to eliminate imperialist control. In particular, India must be declared an independent nation and at present application should be given to this status to the largest possible extent."

On October 10, Gandhi wrote an editorial, "On Trial", stating his differences with the Working Committee:

"In the course of the long conversation with the members of the Congress Working Committee, I discovered that their non-violence had never gone beyond fighting the British Government with that weapon. I had hugged the belief that the Congressmen had appreciated the logical result of the practice of non-violence for the past twenty years in fighting the biggest imperialist power in the world. But in great experiments like that of non-violence, hypothetical questions have hardly any play. I myself used to say in answer to the questions that when we had actually acquired independence, we would know whether we could defend ourselves non-violently or not. But today the question is no longer hypothetical. For, whether there is on the part of the British Government a favourable declaration or not, the Congress has to decide upon the course it would adopt in the event of an invasion of India. For though there may

be no settlement with the Government, the Congress has to declare its policy and say whether it would fight the invading host non-violently or violently.

"So far as I can read the Working Committee's mind, after a fairly full discussion, the members think that Congressmen are unprepared for non-violent defence against armed invasion.

"This is tragic. Surely the means adopted for driving an enemy from one's own house must, more or less, coincide with those to be adopted for keeping him out of the house. If anything, the latter process must be easier. The fact however is that our fight has not been one of non-violent resistance of the strong. It has been one of passive resistance of the weak. Therefore, there is no spontaneous response in our hearts, at this supreme moment, to an undying faith in the efficacy of non-violence. The Working Committee, therefore, wisely said that they were not ready for the logical step. The tragedy of the situation is that if the Congress is to throw in its lot with those who believe in the necessity of armed defence of India, the past twenty years will have been years of gross neglect of the primary duty of Congressmen to learn the science of armed warfare. And I fear that history will hold me, as the general of the fight, responsible for the tragedy. The future historian will say that I should have perceived that the nation was learning not the non-violence of the strong but merely the passivity of the weak, and that I should have, therefore, provided for the Congressmen's military training.

"Being obsessed with the idea that somehow or other India will learn true non-violence, it would not occur to me to invite my co-workers to train themselves for armed defence. On the contrary, I used to discountenance all sword-play and the display of the stout lathis. Nor am I even now repentant for the past. I have the unquenchable faith that, of all the countries in the world, India is the one country which can learn the art of non-violence, that if the test were applied even now, there would be found, perhaps, many thousands of men and women who would be willing to die without harbouring malice against their persecutors. I have harangued crowds and told them repeatedly that they might have to suffer much, including even death by shooting. Did not thousands of men and women brave hardships during the salt campaign equal to any that soldiers are called upon to bear? No different capacity

is required from what has been already evinced, if India has to contend against an invader. Only it will have to be on a much vaster scale.

"One thing ought not to be forgotten. India unarmed would not require to be destroyed through poison gas or bombardment. It is the Maginot Line that has made the Siegfried Line necessary, and *vice versa*. Defence of India by the present methods has been necessary because she is an appendage of Britain. Free India can have no enemy. And if her people have learnt the art of saying resolutely 'no' and acting up to it, I dare say, no one would want to invade her. Our economy would be so modelled, as to prove no temptation for the exploiter.

"But some Congressmen will say: 'Apart from the British, India has so many martial races within her border that they will want to put up a fight for the country which is as much theirs as ours.' This is perfectly true. I am, therefore, talking for the moment of Congressmen only. How would they act in the event of an invasion? We shall never convert the whole of India to our creed, unless we are prepared to die for it.

"The opposite course appals me. Already the bulk of the army is manned by the Muslims of the north, Sikhs and Gurkhas. If the masses of the south and the centre wish to become militarized, the Congress, which is supposed to represent the masses, will have to enter into competition with the former. The Congress will then have to be party to an enormous military budget. There may be all things without the Congress consent. It will make all the difference in the world, whether the Congress is party to them or not. The world is looking for something new and unique from India. And the Congress will be lost in the crowd, if it wears the same old outworn armour that the world is wearing today. The Congress has a name, because it represents non-violence as a political weapon *par excellence*. If the Congress helps the allies as a representative of non-violence, it will give to the allied cause a prestige and a power which will be valuable in deciding the ultimate fate of the war. But the members of the Working Committee have honestly and bravely not made the profession of such non-violence.

"My position is, therefore, confined to myself alone. I have to find out whether I have any fellow traveller along the lonely path. If I am in the minority of one, I must try to make converts. But

whether one or many, I must declare my faith that it is better for India to discard violence altogether even for defending her borders. For India to enter into the race for armaments is to court suicide. With the loss of India to non-violence, the last hope of the world will be gone. I must live up to the creed I have professed for the last half century, and hope to the last breath that India will make non-violence her creed, preserve the dignity of man, and prevent him from reverting to the type from which he is supposed to have raised himself."

Six members of the Working Committee, among whom were Rajendra Prasad and Kripalani, gently complained that Gandhi had wronged them by saying that the whole of the Working Committee was against him in the interpretation he had put upon their action in terms of non-violence. Gandhi cleared his position thus:

"It must be said for them that they had whispered in my ears that they were with me in the interpretation that I had put on non-violence. I had remonstrated that that was not enough. They had boldly to assert themselves at this critical juncture. But their humility would not allow them to do so. But even their vote, if they had cast it in favour of my interpretation, would have been in their individual and not representative capacity. As I have made clear in my note on the Hindu-Muslim clashes, it is not possible to claim non-violence for the Congress masses. Those Congressmen who believe in non-violence as a creed, to be enforced as much in the Hindu-Muslim quarrels as in defending India, have to begin with the alphabet of non-violence and find out how many Congressmen are with them. It is highly probable that they will have to retire from the Congress and, like me, serve and convert the Congress from without. The new road is straight enough but difficult to negotiate. It is overlaid with the bones of lonely seekers. They died without finding the way, but they had the inward satisfaction of having lived and died for their faith. When I wrote on the formation of the peace brigades, I had adumbrated a programme for them. The peace brigades died as soon as they were born, but the programme abides. It is a programme of courting death in preventing the Hindu-Muslim clashes and the like. It is a programme of dying to prevent violence. Such death, however, will count as criminal suicide, if the suicide has not a heart free from impurity and malice."

"We have been out-and-out Gandhi-ites for several years and we do not know what we are to do at this juncture," remarked a village constructive worker. "The Working Committee's resolution has puzzled us."

"But let me know what you mean by out-and-out Gandhi-ites," said Gandhi laughing.

"Those who are prepared to follow your principles through thick and thin," replied the worker.

Gandhi said, "Well then, let me tell you that I am not one myself, for in my practice, I am far from what I have conceived is the ideals of truth and non-violence."

"I quite see what you mean," put in the worker. "I wanted to say that in our humble way we were trying to do constructive work. What are we to do if civil disobedience comes? We voted for the A.-I.C.C. resolution, because it was sponsored by Rajendra Babu, the Sardar and others. But when we think of non-violence, we don't see how we could have voted for it."

"There was nothing against non-violence in voting for the resolution," observed Gandhi. "What you will do is of consequence. And as you will see from the next *Harijan*, I am writing for friends like you. You will see the position developed from week to week. I can sum it up for you. There is no question of civil disobedience, for there is no atmosphere for it; at any rate there is no question of civil disobedience in the aggressive sense as we launched in 1930 and 1932. We might have to offer it, if all constructive work was made impossible, that is to say, if grave irritation was given by the Government. I fear no such thing. At any rate, I will not keep the 'Gandhi-ites' in the dark. You should make a point of following carefully what I write every week."

"But my difficulty is this," said the worker, "we believe implicitly in developing strength through the constructive work which is non-violence in action. But as we are part and parcel of the Congress, the Government may come down with a heavy hand on ashrams, and take possession of them as they did in 1930."

"It will depend on what the Congress will do," said Gandhi. "Supposing what is unlikely happens and the Congress decides upon a course of aggressive civil disobedience, for which, as I have to isolate your ashram from the Congress, that is, you may have to secede from the Congress even at the risk of being labelled as 'cowards'."

"There is one thing more about which I wanted to ask you. We have quarrels in the course of our day-to-day work in the ashram," said the worker.

"Therefore, you see, you are far from being out-and-out Gandhi-ites," said Gandhi interrupting him.

"No, but we have implicit faith in your teachings, and it is only in that sense that I used that term," affirmed the worker.

"But if in spite of that faith they quarrel, then they have not understood even the A B C of 'Gandhism'. What is faith worth, if it is not translated into action? We may not go about parroting truth and non-violence and steering clear of them in our daily life. Take the law of gravitation. The discovery of the law led to numerous other discoveries based on that law. Even so, unless you go on discovering new applications of the law of non-violence, you do not profit by it. You have to reduce it to a science. To say that you have bickerings in the ashram, which make smooth work impossible or difficult, is to say that non-violence is not being practised. Do not go away with the impression that we have no bickerings here in Segaon. We have them, and that is why I said that I was not 'an out-and-out Gandhi-ite'. But if I seriously thought that these bickerings would make our communal life impossible, I might close down the institution. It is not an improbability. I should not shirk that duty, if the idea possessed me. Well, that is only to say that the difficulties are enormous everywhere. Let God guide you and me and us all."

Some workers were impatient. Gandhi regarded the recent resolution passed by the A.-I.C.C. as wise. He said: "It was bound to reiterate the Congress demand for an unequivocal declaration. Its merit lies in not fixing any time-limit for the declaration. It is noteworthy that the resolution was carried by a majority of three to one. It is to be hoped that the British Government will appreciate the friendly spirit in which the Congress is approaching the situation. It is to be hoped also that the Europeans of India will range themselves alongside of the Congress. But the greatest help can only come from the Congressmen themselves. If they do not act on the square, no external sympathy and even help will be of any avail. I see that impatience has seized some Congressmen who want to be doing something to signify their opposition to the Congress decision expressed in the only way open to a democratic organization.

They had their say at the A.-I.C.C. meeting. They are in honour bound to defer direct action, till the Working Committee or the A.-I.C.C. decides otherwise. No reliance can be placed upon an organization which is not able to exercise an effective control over its members. Imagine an army whose soldiers, under the false belief that they are advancing the common cause, adopt measures in defiance of those taken by the headquarters. Such action may well spell defeat. Therefore, I beseech Congressmen at this critical juncture to desist from any action that would savour of indiscipline or defiance. They should surely see that by such action they undermine Congress prestige and weaken its influence."

In an editorial dated October 16, Gandhi wrote on "The Fiction of Majority". It was a reply to the Britishers and the British press advancing the minority claim to prevent the declaration suggested by the Congress:

"If the force of the Congress suggestion has not been overwhelmingly felt, the declaration will not come. There need be no dejection among the Congressmen, if it does not. We shall get our independence, when it is deserved. But, it would be well for the British Government and the allied cause, if the minority argument were not flung in the face of a credulous world. It would be honest to say that the British desire to hold India yet awhile. And there will be nothing wrong in such a desire. India is a conquest. Conquests are not surrendered except when the conquered successfully rebel, or under an awakened conscience the conqueror repents of the conquest, or when the conquered territory ceases to be a profitable concern. I had hoped and still hope that the British, having become war-weary and sickened over the mad slaughter involved in the present war, would want to close it at the earliest possible moment by being above-board in every respect and, therefore, in respect of India. This the British can never be, so long as they hold India in bondage.

"I know that many have been angry with me for claiming an exclusive right for the Congress to speak for the people of India as a whole. It is not an arrogant pretension. It is explicit in the first article of the Congress. The Congress wants and works for independence for the whole of India. It speaks neither for majority nor minority. It seeks to represent all Indians without any distinction. Therefore, those who oppose it should not count, if the claim for

independence is admitted. Those who support this claim simply give added strength to the Congress claim.

"Britain has hitherto held India by producing before the world Indians who want Britain to remain in India as ruler and arbiter between the rival claimants. These will always exist. The question is whether it is right for Britain to plead these rivalries in defence of holding India under subjection, or whether she should now recognize the mistake and leave India to decide upon the method of her own government.

"And who are the minorities? They are religious, political and social: thus Musalmans (religious); Depressed Classes (social); Liberals (political); Princes (social); Brahmins (social); non-Brahmins (social); Lingayats (social); Sikhs (social?); Christians—Protestants and Catholics (religious); Jains (social?); Zamindars (political?). I have got a letter from the secretary of the All-India Shia Conference too registering their claim for separate existence. Who are the majority in this medley? Unfortunately for unhappy India, even the Musalmans are somewhat divided and so are the Christians. It is the policy of the British Government to recognize every group that becomes sufficiently vocal and troublesome. I have drawn no fanciful picture of the minorities. It is true to life. The Congress itself has been obliged to deal with every one of the groups I have mentioned. My list is not exhaustive. It is illustrative. It can be increased *ad libitum*.

"I know that the fashion is to talk of the Hindus forming the majority community. But Hinduism is an elastic indefinable term, and Hindus are not a homogeneous whole like Musalmans and Christians. And when one analyses the majority in any provincial legislature, it will be found to consist of a combination of the so-called minorities. In other words, and in reality, so far as India is concerned, there can only be political parties and no majority or minority communities. The cry of the tyranny of the majority is a fictitious cry.

"I observe that Janab Jinnah Saheb has said in reply to Rajendra Babu's letter, offering to refer the League's grievances against the Congress governments to an arbitration tribunal, that he has already 'placed the whole case before the Viceroy and the Governor-General and requested him to take up the matter without delay as he and the Governors of provinces have been expressly authorized

under the constitution and are entrusted with the responsibility to protect the rights and the interests of the minorities.'

"The matter is now under His Excellency's consideration, and he is the proper authority to take such action and to adopt such measures, as would meet our requirements and would restore complete sense of security and satisfaction amongst the Musalmans in those provinces where the Congress ministries are in charge of the administration.

"It is unfortunate that he has rejected Rajendra Babu's reasonable proposal. Is it rejection of the proffered hand of friendship? Be that as it may, nobody can have anything to say against the Viceroy investigating and adjudicating upon the charges brought against the Congress ministries. Let us hope he will soon conduct the investigation. Whether the Muslims are regarded as minorities or otherwise, their, as well as any other community's rights and privileges, religious, social, cultural and political, must be regarded as a sacred trust to be jealously guarded. And the independence of India will make no difference to the protection of those rights. In fact, they will be better protected in every way, if only because in the framing of the charter of independence by the nation's representatives the Muslims and other minorities, real or so-called, will have an effective voice.

"Consider for one moment what can happen if the English were to withdraw all of a sudden and there was no foreign usurper to rule. It may be said that the Punjabis, be they Muslims, Sikhs or others, will overrun India. It is highly likely that the Gurkhas will throw in their lot with the Punjabis. Assume further that the non-Punjabi Muslims will make common cause with the Punjabis. Where will the Congressmen, composed chiefly of the Hindus, be? If they are still truly non-violent, they will be left unmolested by the warriors. Congressmen won't want to divide power with the warriors but will refuse to let them exploit their unarmed countrymen. Thus if anybody has cause to keep the British rule for protection from the stronger element, it is the Congressmen and those Hindus and others who are represented by the Congress. Therefore the question resolves itself into not who is numerically superior, but who is stronger. Surely there is only one answer. Those who raise the cry of minority in danger have nothing to fear from the so-called majority which is merely a paper majority and which in

any event is ineffective because it is weak in the military sense. But paradoxical as it may appear, it is literally true that the so-called minorities' fear has some bottom only so long as the weak majority has the backing of the British bayonets to enable it to play at democracy. But the British power will, so long as it so chooses, successfully play one against the other calling the parties by whatever names it pleases. This process need not be dishonest. They may honestly believe that so long as there are rival claims put up, they must remain in India in response to a call from God to hold the balance evenly between them. Only that way lies not democracy, but fascism, nazism, bolshevism and imperialism, all facets of the doctrine of 'might is right'. I would fain hope that this war will change values. It can only do so, if India is recognized as independent and if that India represents unadulterated non-violence on the political field."

Next Step

1939

ON OCTOBER 17, 1939, Lord Linlithgow, the Viceroy, made a declaration which implicitly accepted the Muslim League's claim to speak for the Muslims of India. As to the war aims, he repeated the British Prime Minister's declaration. As to the freedom of India, he renewed the pledge that dominion status was the goal of the British policy in India. To that end the act of 1935 would be reconsidered after the war "in the light of the Indian views" and with due regard for the opinions of the minorities. And as to the immediate action, he proposed the establishment of an advisory council, representing all India, to associate the Indian public opinion with the prosecution of the war.

"The Viceregal declaration is profoundly disappointing," Gandhi said. "It would have been better, if the British Government had declined to make any declaration whatsoever. The long statement made by the Viceroy simply shows that the old policy of 'divide and rule' is to continue. So far as I can see, the Congress will be no party to it, nor can the India of Congress conception be a partner with Great Britain in her war with Herr Hitler. The Indian declaration shows clearly that there is to be no democracy for India, if Britain can prevent it. Another round table conference is promised at the end of the war. Like its predecessor, it is bound to fail. The Congress asked for bread and it has got a stone. The Congress will have to go in wilderness again, before it becomes strong and pure enough to reach its objective. I have no doubt that Congressmen will await the Working Committee's decision."

A supporting statement by Lord Zetland, Secretary of State for India, in the House of Lords the next day was equally disappointing. It was in the course of this very statement that Lord Zetland paid a personal tribute to Gandhi: "The most outstanding figure on the Indian political stage, known to and beloved by the people of

India for the readiness which he has shown not only to interpret to us the viewpoint and aspirations of the Indian National Congress, but to endeavour to appreciate in his turn our viewpoint and the difficulties with which we had to grapple, and furthermore, for the help which he has most willingly given us in our endeavours to surmount them."

In an interview given to *Times of India*, Gandhi said: "I blame neither the Viceroy nor the British War Cabinet. Our independence is not to depend upon the British or any one else's mercy. It will come when the people are ready for it. Evidently the British statesmen think that the people of India are not ready. The Congress or any other organization that seeks to represent the millions has to consolidate its strength and resources for the purpose." He further remarked that *Times of India* should direct its appeal to the Englishmen and ask them to do the right thing by India in keeping with the professed war aims of Britain. He said that he was grieved to find that the newspaper which had till the other day been urging the authorities to make a generous gesture had suddenly changed its front. Gandhi concluded with his reply to the personal reference made to him in the paper. He denied that he had been inconsistent or that he had deviated from his first statements in which he had expressed his sympathy for England and France. He said he still held the same view. But now that the issue had been raised, he expected England to face the issue and give a satisfactory answer. His advice to the Congress did not mean that India's support to the allies should be at the expense of her own freedom. He would not be a party to India being tied to the chariot wheel of Britain. His prayer still was not only that Britain and France should win but that Germany should not be ruined. He had no desire to rear freedom of India on the ashes of any belligerent powers, even as he did not want the freedom of the European powers to be built upon the ruins of India's freedom.

The Working Committee lost no time in declaring the Viceroy's statement as wholly unsatisfactory and calculated to rouse resentment. The committee meeting was held at Wardha on October 23, Gandhi being present throughout the discussions. "The Viceregal statement is unequivocal reiteration of the same old imperialistic policy," said the resolution. "The committee regard the mention of the differences among several parties as a screen to hide the true

intention of Britain. What the committee had asked for was a declaration of the war aims as a test of Britain's bona fides regarding India, irrespective of the attitude of opposing parties and groups. The Congress has always stood for the amplest guarantee of the rights of the minorities. The freedom the Congress claimed was not for the Congress or any particular group or community but for the nation and for all communities in India that go to build that nation. . . In the circumstances, the committee cannot possibly give any support to Great Britain, for it would amount to an endorsement of the imperialist policy which the Congress has ever sought to end. As a first step in this direction, the committee call upon the Congress ministries to tender their resignations."

The Working Committee appealed to the nation to end all internal controversies and called upon all the Congress committees and Congressmen generally to be prepared for all eventualities, and to show restraint of word and deed. The committee further warned Congressmen against any hasty action in the shape of civil disobedience, political strikes and the like. "The committee will watch the situation and the activities of the British Government in India, and will not hesitate to guide the country to take further steps whenever the necessity for this arises."

The Parliamentary Sub-Committee called upon Congress provincial governments to resign after disposing of the urgent business by October 31.

In response to the request from *News Chronicle*, Gandhi clarified the Congress position in the following cable:

"What Congress had asked was not an answer to India's demand for independence, but it had reminded Britain of neglect to declare whether war against Herr Hitler to preserve democracy included India. This had no connection with India's readiness to digest independence. The Congress demand was evidently misunderstood, and the Viceroy began a sort of round table conference in which one member did not know what the other said to the Viceroy, and as a result of these talks he was instructed to make a statement wholly unrelated to the unprecedented upheaval going on in front of us. If the British Government wanted to measure the strength of the Congress and that of the other political organizations, it should have been obvious that the Congress could not satisfy the Government standard. But the Congress had set before itself a far higher

mission. The Congress wanted to help Britain by giving her moral support which was its speciality and the only thing it could give. The Congress would not give this, unless it was clear that Britain's political morality was wholly sound. I wish the British Government would realize that India is not begging for her independence. The Congress asked Britain to say that Britain would not resist India's independence. The Hindu-Muslim and other difficulties are there beyond dispute. But the question is whether Britain will stand aside and let India settle her own difficulties in her own way, when the war is over. That is why the Congress has suggested a constituent assembly, where every single community will be fully represented to frame India's constitution. The mischief done is very real. The Working Committee have passed a mild resolution. It still affords scope for repairing the blunder. Will the British public realize that it is a blunder, or will they persist in the hypnotic belief that the India Office can never err and that the Congress will not rest and will give no rest till the goal is won? Its very existence depends upon its relentless pursuit of the goal which is no less than Complete Independence of India."

The following statement was cabled by Gandhi in response to a group of important newspapers—*New York Times, Daily Herald, Paris Soir, Populo d'Italia, National Tidente, Yormiri Shimbun* and the Tass News Agency:

"The Congress has demanded no constitutional change during the war. Its demand is for declaration that Britain's war aims necessarily include the independence of India according to the charter framed by her elected representatives after the war. This declaration should be acted up to during the war to the utmost extent possible. The minorities' question is a bogy. Not that it does not exist, but its proper solution can only come out of the proposed constituent assembly. The burden of solving the tangle rests not on Britain, but on the constituent assembly. According to Indian opinion, Hindu-Muslim question is the direct product of British rule. The least the Congress could do was to withdraw the Congress ministers from provincial administrations. Further action will wholly depend upon Britain's handling of the crisis. The Congress has left the door open to Britain to mend the mistake."

On October 24, Gandhi wrote an editorial stating that the control and management of civil disobedience had been left by the Working

Committee in his hands. Addressing the people to be prepared for the worse, he wrote:

"The best way of losing a cause is to abuse your opponent and to trade upon his weakness. Whatever may be true of the other modes of warfare, in satyagraha it has been held that the causes for failure are to be sought within. The refusal by the British Government to fulfil the Congress hope that they would make the expected declaration, is solely due to the weaknesses in the Congress organization and Congressmen.

"The greatest weakness lies in our want of full appreciation of non-violence and its many implications. All our other weaknesses are to be derived from that one grave defect. Whilst we have fairly observed physical non-violence, our breasts have harboured violence. Hence, our non-violence in respect of the Government is a result of our incapacity for effective violence. But, therefore, we have been betrayed into violence in our dealings with one another. We have quarrelled with one another in committees; sometimes we have even come to blows. We have refused to carry out instructions of the Congress Working Committee. We have formed rival groups wanting to seize power. Hindus and Muslims have come to blows on the slightest pretext. Congressmen must be held partly responsible for the failure to compose communal differences. It is all very well to blame the British Government for our disunity. But that way we prolong the agony. We knew that the policy of 'divide and rule' was there in 1920, and yet we made the Hindu-Muslim unity part of our constructive programme. We did so because we had expected that, in spite of the Government being in our way, we would achieve unity. What is more, we seemed for the time being to have attained it.

"These examples of our own weaknesses are terrible. They have prevented the Congress from rising to its full height, and reduced our professions of non-violence to a mockery. If my analysis of the causes of our failure is correct, there is the solid consolation that the remedy is dependent not upon any extraneous circumstance but upon ourselves. We must, therefore, put our own organization in order and make it pure enough and strong enough to command respect, not by inspiring fear among those who impede our march towards the goal but by indubitable evidence of our non-violent speech and action.

"The Working Committee's resolution, if it is evidence of Congress earnestness in vindicating India's freedom, is also a test of the Congress discipline and non-violence. Though nothing is said in the resolution, the control and management of civil disobedience has been left in my hands at the will of the committee. Needless to say I have no sanction, never had any, save the willing and knowing obedience of the vast mass of Congressmen, registered and unregistered, to the instructions issued to them through the committee, or through *Young India* and *Navajivan*, whilst they were published, and now through *Harijan*. When, therefore, I find that my instructions have no running power, Congressmen will find me retiring from the field without ado. But, if I am to retain the general control of the struggle, I shall want the strictest adherence to discipline. So far as I can see, there is no possibility of civil resistance on a large scale unless Congressmen show perfect discipline and greater appreciation than hitherto of non-violence and truth. There need be none unless we are goaded into it by the authorities.

"We are engaged in a life and death struggle. Violence surrounds us. It is a time of great trial for the country. No camouflage will answer our purpose. If Congressmen find that they have no non-violence in them, and if they cannot cast out bitterness against the English officials or the countrymen who may oppose the Congress, they must say so openly, discard non-violence and displace the present Working Committee. Such dismissal will be no calamity. But it will be a calamity of the first magnitude to keep the committee without full faith in them and in their instructions. So far as I can see, there is no independence for India except through the strictest adherence to truth and non-violence. My generalship is of no use whatsoever, if I have an army which doubts the efficacy of the weapons with which I arm them. I am as determined a foe of the exploitation of my country, as anyone can be. I am as impatient as the hottest Congressman for the complete deliverance of the country from the foreign yoke. But I have no hate for a single Englishman and for that matter for anybody on earth. If I may not help the allies, I do not wish disaster to them. Though the British Government have grievously disappointed the Congress hope, my hope, I do not seek any gain from their embarrassment.

"My attempt and my prayer are and will be for an honourable peace between the belligerent nations in the least possible time. I

had nursed the hope that there would be an honourable peace and partnership between Britain and India, and that I might be able to play a humble part in finding a way out of the awful carnage that is disgracing humanity and making life itself a burden. But God had willed it otherwise."

At the termination of the Working Committee meeting, Gandhi asked the members to consider the question of non-violence in all its details. The question had been engaging all his time, so much so, that he had gone into silence except with such people whom he saw by appointment and often he woke up in the early hours of the morning thinking about it.

On October 25 he addressed the members of the executive of the Gandhi Seva Sangh:

"The problem haunts me. It gives me no rest. I have described in *Harijan* the position of junior members of the Congress Working Committee. Theirs was a difficult position. They were being torn between loyalty to a principle and loyalty to their colleagues. But their eagerness to make the position clear to me was most welcome. This shows that we are all votaries of truth and even our mental struggles and conflicts arise out of our anxiety to be faithful to it. We had a very fine discussion in the Working Committee yesterday, and we discussed threadbare the position of the members as individuals and as representatives of the Congress and the people. The question with you is different. For, you are here in your individual capacity and you have to decide your conduct, no matter what the Congress or Congressmen may think. The question is thus much simpler for you. Will you adopt an attitude of brotherliness to one who has done your dear ones a grievous injury? Supposing Rajendra Babu was attacked, would you retaliate or rather stand between Rajendra Babu and the assailant and bear cheerfully the blows meant for him? You will do the latter, if you have shed all fear of death and injury to limbs and all considerations for the domestic ties that bind you. Unless you have nothing but brotherliness for those that you would stand by, the principle of non-violence through thick and thin will have no meaning. It would be far better to wind up the sangh than to have an empty resolution.

"Non-violence is not a cloistered virtue, confined only to the *rishi* and the cave-dweller. It is capable of being practised by the millions, not with full knowledge of all its implications, but because

it is the law of our species. It distinguishes man from the brute. But man has not shed the brute in him. He has to strive to do so. This striving applies to the practice of non-violence, not to the belief in it. I cannot strive to believe in a principle; I either believe in it or I do not. And if I believe in it, I must bravely strive to practise it. Ahimsa is an attribute of the brave. Cowardice and ahimsa do not go together any more than water and fire. And it is that ahimsa that every member of the Gandhi Seva Sangh has to make conscious effort to develop in himself.

"We have often thought about this question, but the hour of our trial has arrived today, as much with reference to the war as with the struggle for swaraj and equally with reference to Hindu-Muslim unity. And remember also that your non-violence cannot operate effectively, unless you have faith in the spinning wheel. I would ask you to read *Hind Swaraj* with my eyes and see therein the chapter on how to make India non-violent. You cannot build non-violence on a factory civilization, but you can build it on self-contained villages. Even if Herr Hitler was so minded, he could not devastate 700,000 non-violent villages. He would himself become non-violent in the process. The rural economy, as I have conceived it, eschews exploitation altogether, and exploitation is the essence of violence. You have, therefore, to be rural-minded, before you can be non-violent, and to be rural-minded you have to have full faith in the spinning wheel."

The sangh members met Gandhi again the next day. "How can a believer in the non-violence of your conception be a minister?" was the first question.

"I fear he cannot in the present state of things," said Gandhi. "We have seen that our ministers have had to resort to violence even as the British Government in the pre-autonomy days. It was inevitable perhaps. Had the Congressmen been truly non-violent, there would have been no resort to force. But the Congress majorities were not based on unadulterated non-violence. One minister said the other day that, although he had not given up an iota of non-violence, he could not do without resorting to the minimum of firing. He had resorted to it only to the extent that it was unavoidable. He may have said it then, he may not say it again, if I can help it. For if he goes in again, he will have made his position quite clear, and he will represent a house that is predominantly

non-violent. In other words, he will take office, if he is certain that the people would let him carry on the Government on a non-violent basis."

"But may it not be that whereas a non-violent minister would confine violence to the lowest minimum, one who does not believe in non-violence would observe no such restraint?"

"That belief is a delusion. All those who are using violence today make the same claim. Hitler too would say the same thing. General Dyer was acclaimed as the hero of the hour by the House of Lords because his object was said to be to prevent the spread of mob violence. Soviet Russia believes its violence is a transitional stage to the establishment of an order without violence. In the present state of our belief and practice, it may be better to wind up the sangh, leaving each one to grow unfettered."

"But the suggestion is being made," said Mashruwala, "that we may confine the membership to those only who are engaged in constructive work."

"That suggestion is good, and we can conceivably convert the sangh into such a body and then try each of us in our individual capacity to purify ourselves as much as we can. For non-violence is impossible without self-purification. Let us, therefore, be members of a self-purification association, but no association is necessary for that purpose. Therefore, let us try each in our own way to face difficulties and problems as they come and see how far we can go. In Hudli, two years ago, I asked you to help in the elections and in sending the best possible men to the legislatures. I gave advice in the atmosphere as it existed then. I cannot give you that same advice today. In fact, the time may have come when it becomes necessary to retire from the Congress as I did in 1934."

"How do you think that the masses can practise non-violence, when we know that they are all prone to anger, hate and ill will? They are known to fight for the most trivial things."

"They are, and yet I think they can practise non-violence for the common good. Do you think that the thousands of women that collected contraband salt had ill will against anyone? They knew that the Congress or Gandhi had asked them to do certain things and they did those things in faith and hope. To my mind the most perfect demonstration of non-violence was in Champaran. Did the thousands of ryots who rose up in revolt against the agrarian evils

harbour the least ill will against the Government or the planters? Their belief in non-violence was unintelligent, even as the belief in the earth being round with many is unintelligent. But their belief in their leaders was genuine, and that was enough. With those who lead it is another matter. Their belief has got to be intelligent, and they have to live up to all the implications of the belief."

The Congress stand was debated in the British Parliament on October 26. Commenting on Sir Samuel Hoare's speech, Gandhi observed:

"Even as he speaks from a sense of duty, I hope that I shall receive the same credit. Has dominion status for India any meaning unless it is synonymous with independence? Has the India of his imagination the right to secede from the commonwealth? I like the declaration that the British have shed their imperialist ambition. Will he allow the people of India to judge for themselves whether in reality that ambition has been shed? If it is, then the proof of it should be forthcoming even before India is statutorily declared independent. When the protection of the minorities is pledged against the declaration required by the Congress, the great pronouncement made by Sir Samuel Hoare sounds unreal. What the Congress has asked is not any sounding of the Indian opinion, but a declaration of Britain's intention. I have endeavoured to show that there is no such thing as real minorities in India, whose rights can be endangered by India becoming independent. I observe that Sir Samuel Hoare has mentioned the Europeans also as a minority. The very mention of Europeans, in my opinion, condemns the cry of the interest of minorities. But the protection of minorities, whatever they are, is common cause between the British Government and the Congress. I would like the British Government to remember that there is every prospect of Congress India, to use Sir Samuel's phrase, being a hopeless minority. I like Sir Samuel's division of India into Congress and non-Congress. And if non-Congress India contains not merely all the Musalmans, and all those who might be represented by the Hindu Mahasabha and others who refused to be classified as part of Congress India, it is Congress India which will be in danger of a non-Congress majority. And the Congress has got to make good its position even though the Congress may represent a minority wholly unarmed, partly by outside force but largely by its own will.

"I am glad that Sir Samuel Hoare has declared that the present British policy is to be judged in the moral scales suggested by me. I venture to suggest that if Sir Samuel's speech is the last word on behalf of the British Government, British political morality will be found wanting. Sir Samuel has laughed at non-co-operation as a barren doctrine. I am convinced it is not as barren as he thinks. It has proved its worth in the eyes of millions of Indians and will do so again, if the Congress remains truly non-violent, as I hope it will. The Congress decision is an imperative call of duty. It puts both the Congress and the British Government on their trial. Nothing but good will come out of it, if both will play the game."

"The more I ponder over Sir Samuel Hoare's speech," Gandhi wrote on October 30, "the more puzzled I become. It is both good and bad. His statement that the British Government have shed imperialism hardly squares with his defence of the promises made to minorities. He gives up the whole of his case when he brackets the Europeans of India and the princes with the other minorities. If Europeans who have made no home in India and whose roots are all in Europe are a minority requiring a protection, the British soldiers and civilians too are a hopeless minority require to be protected. In other words, rights acquired by conquest are to remain intact. The European interests are an imposition protected by the British bayonet. A free India will claim to examine every European interest on its merit, and that which conflicts with the national interest will go by the board. I turn up *The Oxford Dictionary* and I find the following definition of imperialism, "extension of British Empire where trade requires protection of the flag". If this is imperialism, does not Sir Samuel's speech fully protect it? India's ambition is to destroy that imperialism.

"Do not the princes too stand much on the same footing as the Europeans? Many, if not most of them, are an imperial creation and sustained for imperial interests. The princes in no way represent their people. If I published the complaints I receive from the people of the states, I should need to double the size of *Harijan*. They make a woeful tale, neither creditable to the princes, nor to their protector the British authority. Does not this British protectorate mean naked imperialism? The Congress is invited to regard the princes as a minority. The British power is the overlord without whom the princes cannot breathe! They are not free even to see

Congressmen, much less to enter into any settlement with them. I do not complain against the princes for what they are doing in the crisis. They are powerless to do otherwise.

"Sir Samuel talks of the Communal Award as a meritorious act of the British Government. I am sorry that he mentioned it. I have very bitter memories of the award which was being hatched during the Round Table Conference time and I am unable to regard it as a proud British achievement. I know how miserably the parties themselves failed, I regard the award as discreditable for all parties. I say this apart from its merits which do not bear close scrutiny. But the Congress has loyally accepted it, because I was party to the request made to the late Mr. MacDonald to arbitrate.

"Then Sir Samuel's division of India into Congress India and non-Congress India! It would have been better if Sir Samuel had talked of armed India and unarmed India. The Congress represents the unarmed millions, no matter to what caste or creed they belong. Is it right to pit armed India against its unarmed part? It will be hard to find a parallel in history in which unarmed people have represented the urge for freedom, turning the very armlessness into the central means for deliverance. Sir Samuel has informed the world that India's battle for freedom can't be won till unarmed India has come to terms with armed India including, of course, the British Government. Again, I do not complain. Sir Samuel could not, all of a sudden, alter British tradition and nature. Only it is my painful duty to show how an unbiased India has understood his speech. I have no doubt that Sir Samuel has meant what he has said. Only he has said nothing that can quench the parched throats of Congressmen who are thirsting for freedom. The Congress has to live up more closely than ever to its creed and develop non-violent strength which will disarm armed India and with it armed Britain. If it can do so, it will be the greatest contribution to the peace of the world. For peace won't come out of a clash of arms but out of justice lived and done by unarmed nations in the face of odds."

By the end of October, all the Congress ministries resigned. The following resolution was moved by the premiers in the provincial assemblies of Madras, the Central Provinces, the United Provinces, Bihar, Orissa and the Frontier Province and duly passed:

"This assembly regrets that the British Government have made India a participant in the war between Great Britain and Germany

without the consent of the people of India and have further in complete disregard of the Indian opinion passed laws and adopted measures, curtailing the powers and the activities of the provincial Governments. Hence the assembly recommends to the Government to convey to the Government of India and through them to the British Government that in consonance with the avowed aims of the present war, it is essential in order to secure the co-operation of the Indian people that the principle of democracy with effective safeguards for the Muslim and the other minorities be applied to India and her policy be guided by her own people; and that India should be regarded as an independent nation entitled to frame her own constitution and further that suitable action should be taken in so far as it is possible in the immediate present to give effect to that principle in regard to the present governance of India. This assembly regrets that the situation in India has not been understood rightly by His Majesty's Government when authorizing the statement that has been made on their behalf in regard to India, and in view of this failure of the British Government to meet India's demand, this assembly is of the opinion that the Government cannot associate itself with British policy."

The Muslim League stand was made clear in its amendment to the Congress party's resolution: "The democratic parliamentary system of Government under the constitution has failed, it being utterly unsuited to the condition and genius of the people and, therefore, the entire problem of India's future constitution should be wholly reviewed and revised *de novo* and that the British should not make any commitment in principle or otherwise without the approval and consent of the All-India Muslim League, which alone represents, and can speak, on behalf of the Musalmans of India, as well as without consent of all important minorities and interests."

"Janab Jinnah Saheb looks to the British power to safeguard the Muslim right," observed Gandhi. "Nothing that the Congress can do or concede will satisfy him. For, he can always and naturally from his own standpoint, ask for more than the British can give or can guarantee. And, therefore, there can be no limit to the Muslim League demands. So far as the Congress is concerned, it does not represent all the Hindus or all of any single community except in the sense that the Congress represents all, because all are believed to desire independence for the country and the Congress is without

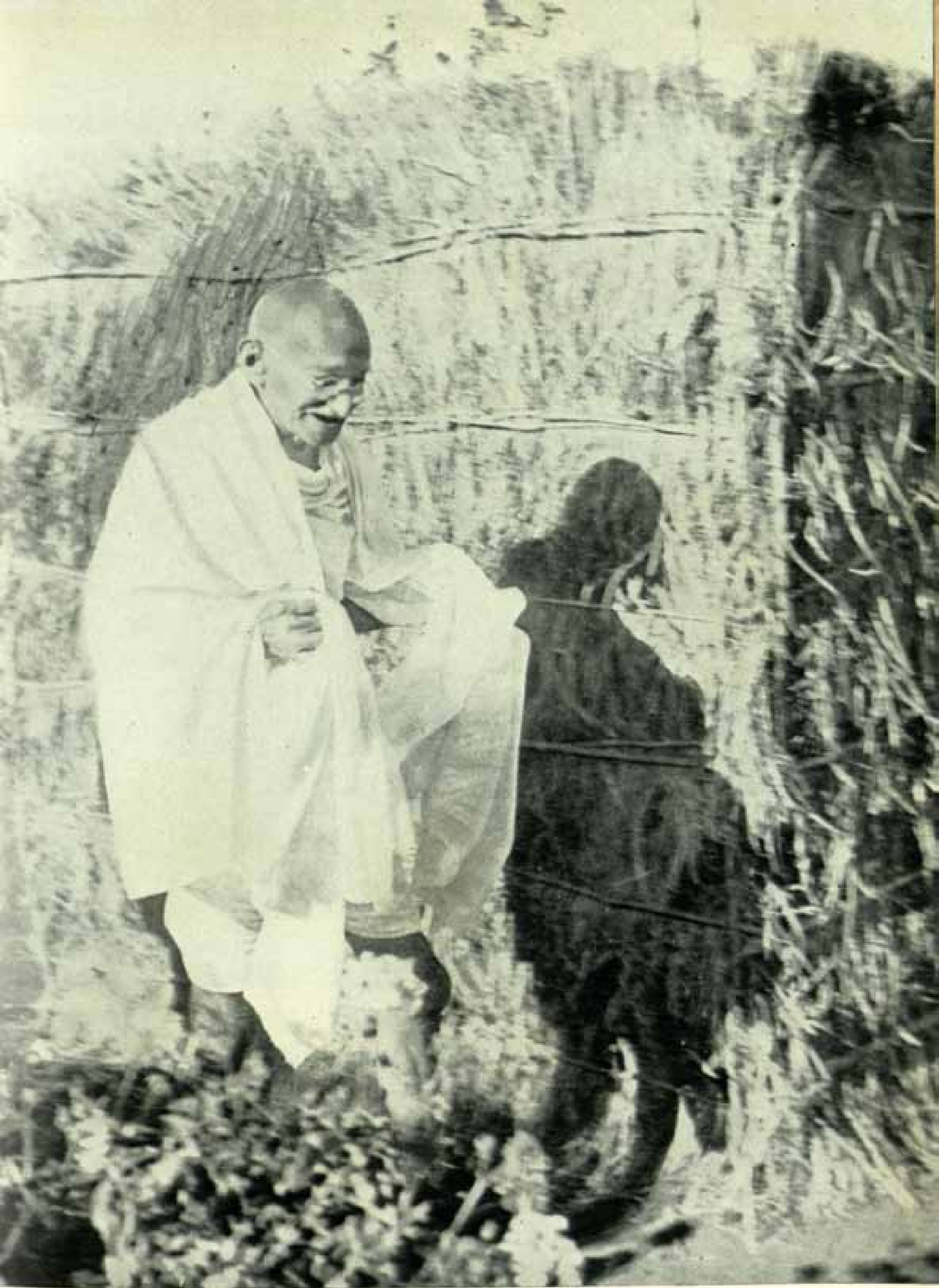
a rival in fighting for that goal. In fact, the Congress is the only national army the country possesses. It is not the less but all the more an army, for its being non-violent. It has been the tradition of the Congress to refuse to represent any but the national interest. The Congress has certainly never represented the Hindus as such. That function is claimed by the Hindu Mahasabha, just as that of solely representing the Muslim interests is claimed by the Muslim League. The only course left open to the Congress, therefore, is to state its communal policy for the guidance of the Congressmen, no matter to which community they belong. The Congress should have no quarrel with the League for getting all it can through the British power. An institution that is fighting that power will never put itself in the wrong by fighting the Muslims."

V. D. Savarkar, Dr. Ambedkar, Kelkar, Sir Cowasji Jehangir and some others wrote to the Viceroy to warn him not to be misled in "the position enunciated by Mr. Gandhi or to regard the Congress and the Muslim League as representing the whole or even the bulk of India."

Gandhi became a target of attack from the interested quarters in India and England. Apart from political criticism, mischievous stories were being circulated even about his personal life. Under "My life", Gandhi wrote:

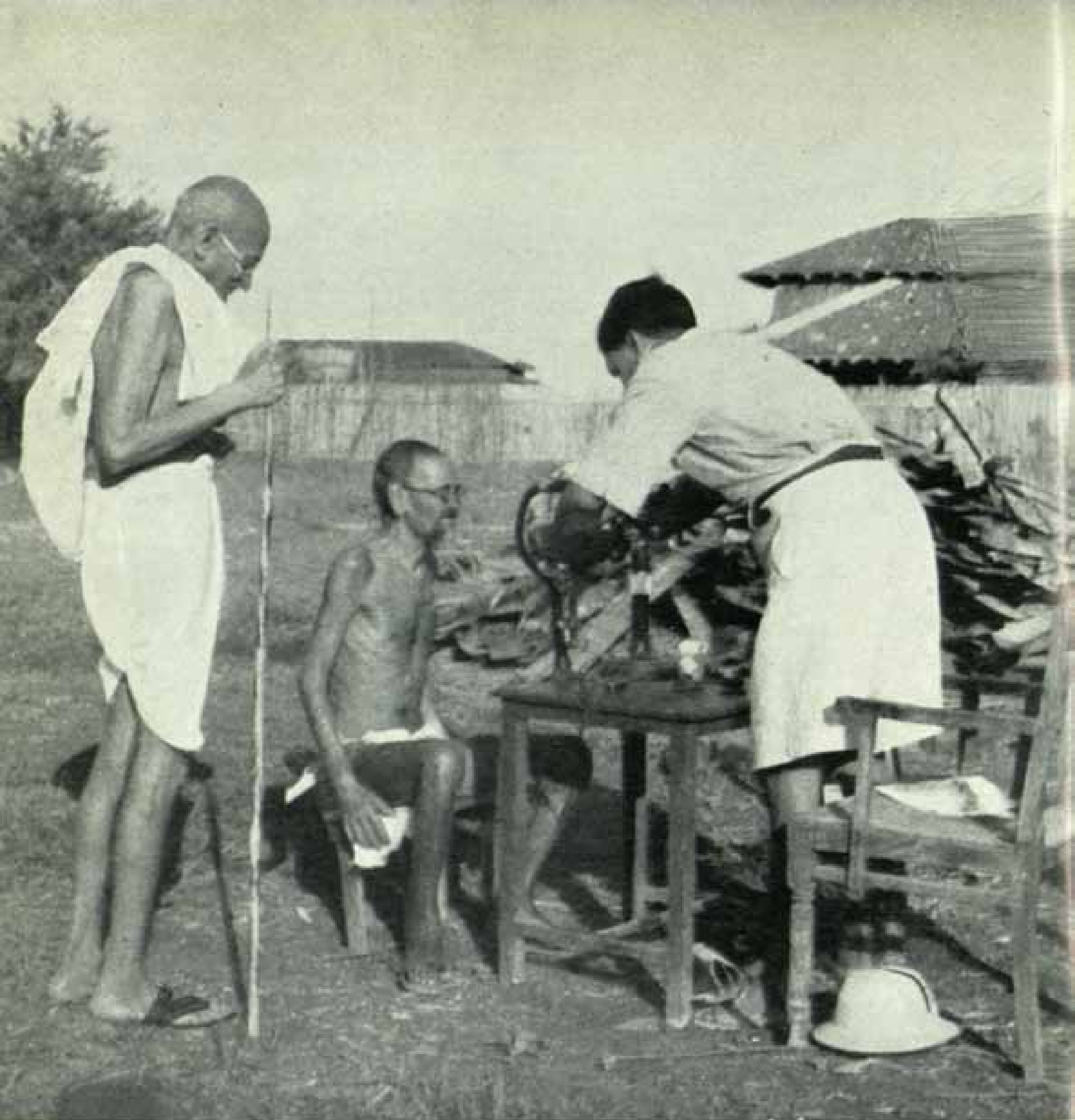
"Two days ago I received a letter signed by four or five Gujaratis sending me a paper whose one mission seems to be to paint me as black as it is possible for any person to be painted. According to its headline, it is a paper devoted to 'the organization of Hindus'. The charges against me are mostly taken from my confessions and are distorted from their setting. Among many other charges, the charge of sensuality is most marked. My brahmacharya is said to be a cloak to hide my sensuality. Poor Dr. Sushila Nayyar has been dragged before the public gaze for the crime of giving me the massage and medicated baths, the two things for which she is the best qualified among those who surround me. The curious may be informed that there is no privacy about these operations which take over one and half hours and during which I often go off to sleep but during which I also transact business with Mahadev, Pyarelal or other co-workers.

"These charges, to my knowledge, began with my active campaign against untouchability. This was when it was included in the



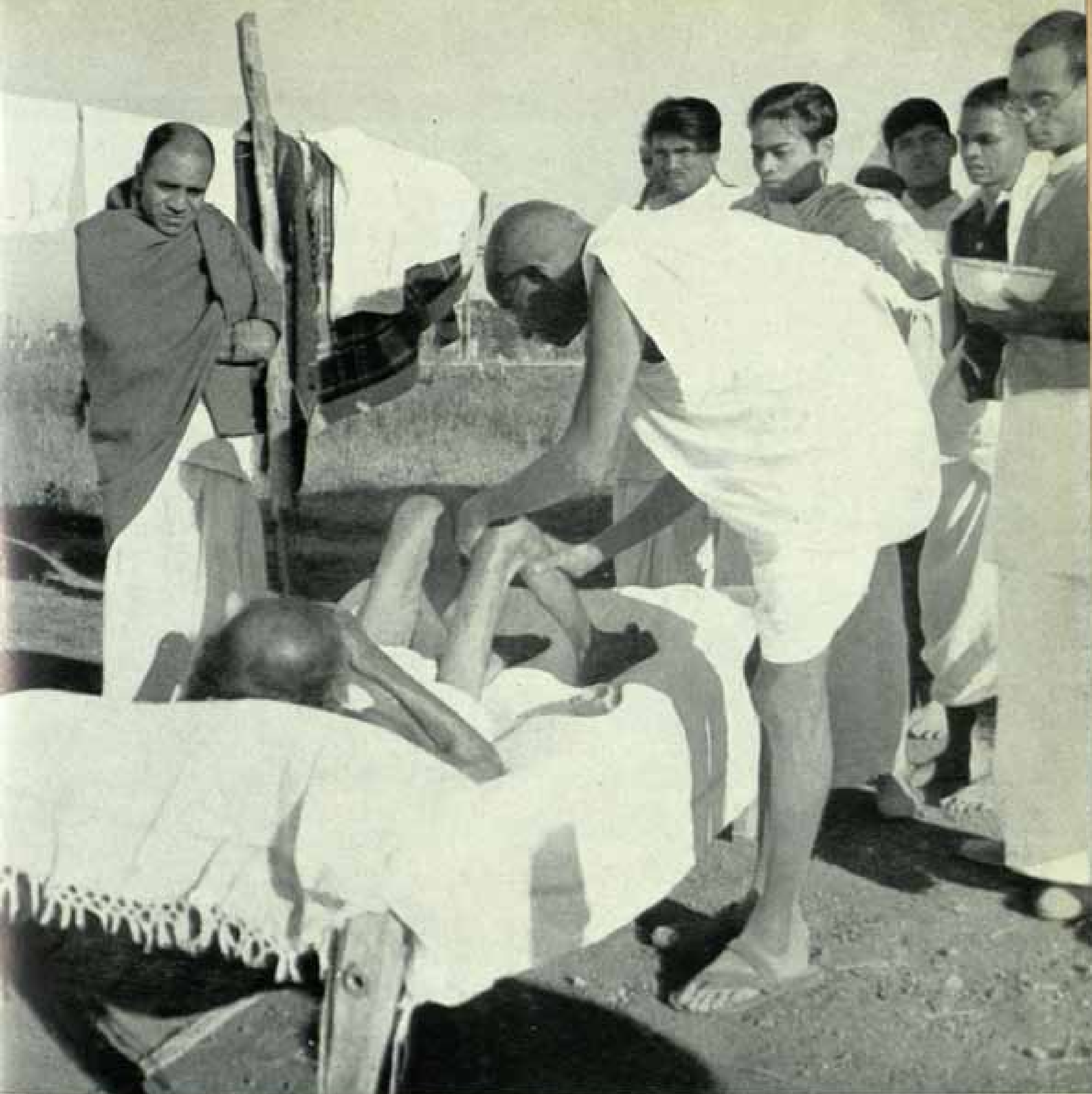
From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Gandhi on his round, Segaon, 1939



Photograph : Kanu Gandhi

At the medical examination of leprosy case of Parchure Shastri, a teacher and ashramite, Segaon, 1939



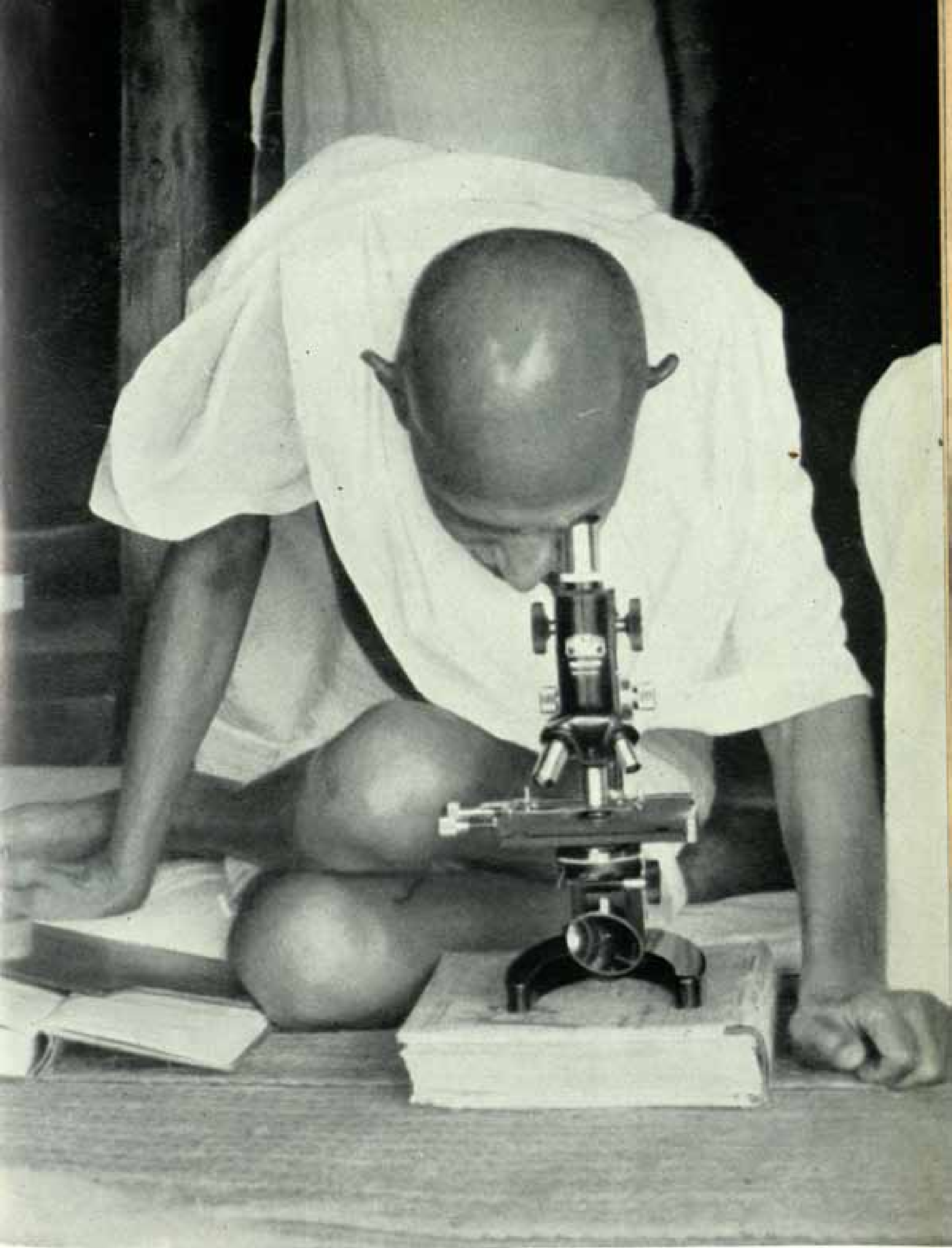
Photograph : Kanu Gandhi

Gandhi's daily attendance on the leprosy case, Segaon, 1939



Photograph : Kanu Gandhi

Gandhi giving daily massage to the leper inmate, Segaon



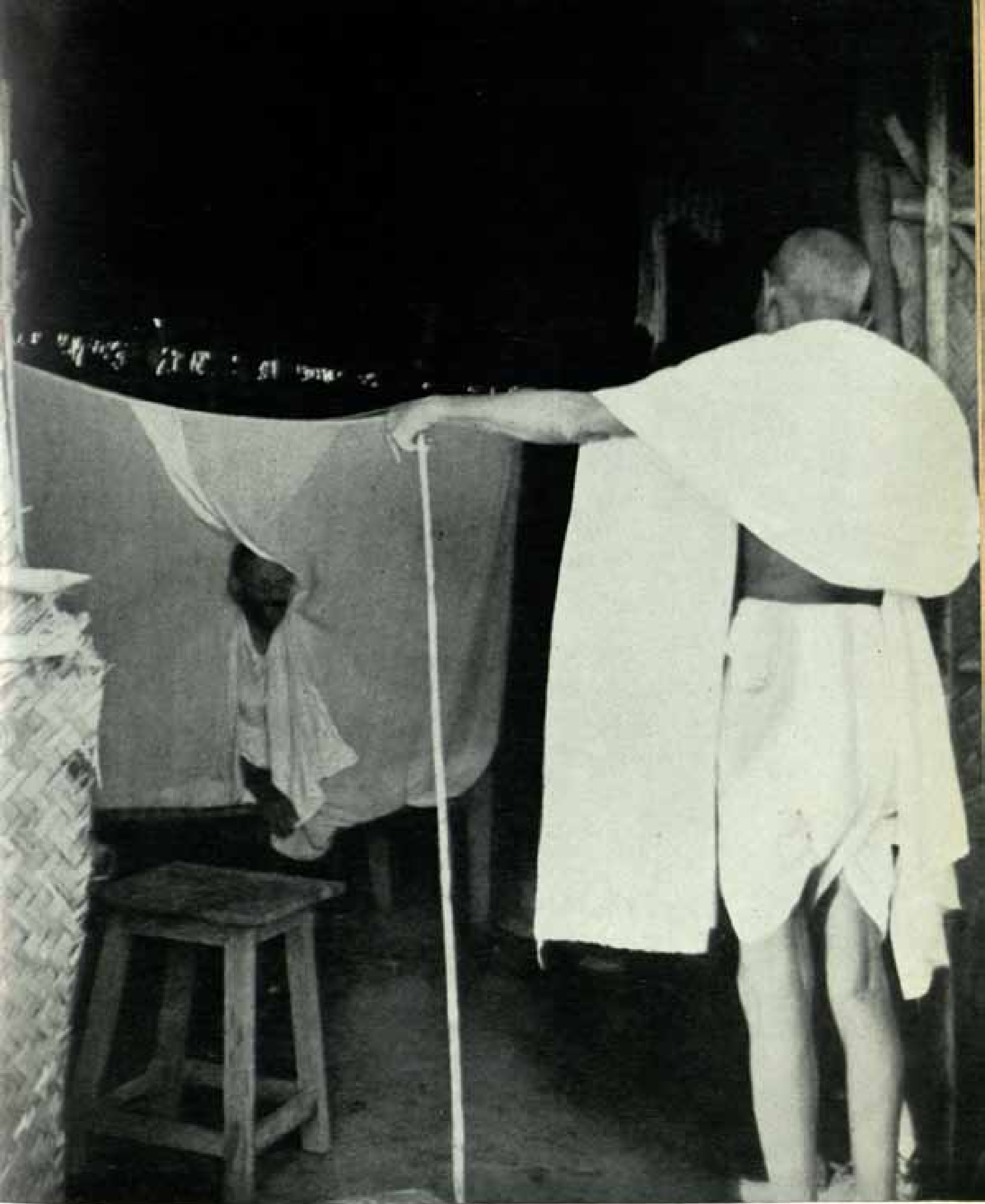
Photograph : Kanu Gandhi

Studying the leprosy germs, Segaon



Photograph: Kanu Gandhi

Gandhi nursing the leper patient, Segaon



Courtesy: Wallace Kirkland

On visit to Parchure Shastri, leper inmate, Segaon



From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Instructing the cleaning squad, Segaon, 1939

Congress programme and I began to address crowds on the subject and insisted on having Harijans at meetings and in the ashram. It was then that some sanatanists, who used to help me and befriend me, broke with me and began a campaign of vilification. Later, a very high-placed Englishman joined the chorus. He picked out my freedom with women and showed up my 'saintliness' as sinfulness. In this chorus, there were also one or two well-known Indians. During the Round Table Conference, American journals indulged in cruel caricatures of me. Mirabehn who used to look after me was the target of their attack. As far as I could understand Mr. Edward Thompson, who knows the gentlemen who have been behind these charges, my letters to Premabehn Kantak, who is a member of the Sabarmati Ashram, have also been used to prove my depravity. She is a graduate and worker of proved merit. She used to ask me questions relating to brahmacharya and other topics. I sent her full replies. She thought that they might be of general use and she published them with my permission. I hold them to be absolutely innocent and pure.

"Hitherto, I have ignored all these charges. But Mr. Thompson's talks about them and the importunity of the Gujarati correspondents, who say that the indictment sent by them is but a sample of what is being said about me, impel me to repudiate them. I have no secrets of my own in this life. I have owned my weaknesses. If I were sensually inclined, I would have the courage to make the confession. It was when I developed detestation of the sensual connection even with my own wife and had sufficiently tested myself that I took the vow of brahmacharya in 1906, and that for the sake of better dedication to the service of the country. From that day, began my open life. I do not remember having ever slept or remained with my own wife or other women with closed doors, except for the occasions referred to in my writings in *Young India* and *Navajivan*. Those were the black nights with me. But as I have said repeatedly, God has saved me in spite of myself. I claim no credit for any virtue that I may possess. He is for me the Giver of all good and has saved me for His service.

"And from that day when I began brahmacharya, our freedom began. My wife became a free woman, free from my authority as her lord and master, and I became free from my slavery to my own appetite which she had to satisfy. No other woman had any

attraction for me in the same sense that my wife had. I was too loyal to her as husband and too loyal to the vow I had taken before my mother to be slave to any other woman. But the manner in which my brahmacharya came to me irresistibly drew me to woman as the mother of man. She became sister or daughter to me. I had enough women about me at Phoenix. Several of them were my own relations whom I had enticed to South Africa. Others were co-workers' wives or relatives. Among these were the Wests and other Englishmen. The Wests included West, his sister, wife, and his mother-in-law who had become the granny of the settlement.

"As has been my wont, I could not keep the new good thing to myself. So I presented brahmacharya for the acceptance of all the settlers. All approved of it. And some took it up and remained true to the ideal. My brahmacharya knew nothing of the orthodox laws governing its observance. I framed my own rules as occasion necessitated. But I have never believed that all contact with woman was to be shunned for the due observance of brahmacharya. That restraint which demands abstention from all contact, no matter how innocent, with the opposite sex is a forced growth, having little or no vital value. Therefore, the natural contacts for service were never restrained. And I found myself enjoying the confidences of many sisters, European and Indian, in South Africa. And when I invited the Indian sisters in South Africa to join the civil resistance movement, I found myself one of them. I discovered that I was specially fitted to serve the womankind. To cut the—for me enthralling—story short, my return to India found me in no time one with India's woman. The easy access I had to their hearts was an agreeable revelation to me. Muslim sisters never kept purdah before me here, even as they did not in South Africa. I sleep in the ashram surrounded by women, for they feel safe with me in every respect. It should be remembered that there is no privacy in the Segaon Ashram.

"If I were sexually attracted towards women, I have courage enough, even at this time of life to become a polygamist. I do not believe in free love—secret or open. Free open love I have looked upon as dog's love. Secret love is besides cowardly.

"Sanatanist Hindus may abhor my non-violence. I know many of them think that the Hindus will become cowards, if they remain under my influence. I know of no man having become a coward

under my influence. They may decry my non-violence as much as they like. But they ill serve themselves or Hinduism by indulging in palpable lies."

To the British charge of "unconditional support," he replied:

"Several British friends are puzzled and ask, 'Have you really said that you will give unconditional support to Great Britain, as you are reported to have said?' The origin of this report lies in my very first statement after my talk with the Viceroy. The phrase 'unconditional support' does not occur in that statement. But had the Congress appreciated the position I took up, the Congress support would have been unconditional in the sense that the Congress would not have asked for the clarification of Britain's war aims. But the Working Committee could not honestly take up that position. Therefore, it passed, as it had every right and justification for passing the resolution it did. Events have shown the prudence of the course adopted by the Working Committee. But had it waived the demand for the declaration of the war aims, the support would have been unconditional. Remember, according to its constitution the Congress is a non-violent body. Therefore, its support would have been purely moral. It has no soldiers to supply, and it has no money to give. But it has its good wishes. In my opinion, those good wishes would have been more than many battalions. The Congress support would have put the British cause on an unassailable moral basis. It would have made the British case just, beyond measure. All the dependent races of the earth would have felt an indescribable glow of freedom. The British moral stock would have shot up high at a bound. That is what the Congress unconditional support would have meant.

"But God had willed otherwise. British statesmen had not faith enough in the Congress profession of non-violence. I must confess that the Congress would not pass the test to the satisfaction of a strict though just examiner. Anyway, my British friends should have no difficulty in understanding my position. Of course, it is open to them to argue that as a war resister I could not even give the moral support. I have already said in these columns that I do not hold such a view. It is open to a war resister to judge between two combatants and wish success to the one who has justice on his side. By so judging, he is more likely to bring peace between the two than by remaining a mere spectator."

"The Next Step" was outlined by Gandhi in an editorial dated October 30:

"I have never felt the weight of responsibility as heavily as I do today in connection with the present impasse with the British Government. The resignation of Congress ministries was a necessity. But the next step is by no means clear. Congressmen seem to be expecting a big move. Some correspondents tell me, if I only give the call, there will be an India-wide response, such as has been never made before. And they assure me that the people will remain non-violent. Beyond their assurance, I have no other proof in support of their statement. I have proof in my own possession to the contrary. I cannot identify myself with any civil disobedience, unless I am convinced that Congressmen believe in non-violence with all its implications and will follow implicitly the instructions issued from time to time.

"Apart from the uncertainty of the observance of non-violence in Congress ranks is the tremendous fact that the Muslim League looks upon the Congress as the enemy of the Muslims. This makes it wellnigh impossible for the Congress to organize any successful non-violent revolution through civil disobedience. It will certainly mean Hindu-Muslim riots. The non-violent technique, therefore, demands the reduction of civil disobedience to the lowest term consistent with national self-respect. The offensive will have to be taken by the British Government. In a situation so delicate and so unexampled, no individual Congressman or even a Congress committee can be allowed to take the law into their own hands. The Working Committee should alone have the right to declare and to regulate civil disobedience.

"I have undertaken to guide the Working Committee, but my limitations appal me. My physical condition makes it impossible for me to move about as I used to before. I am, therefore, cut off from all outward contact with the masses. Even the present Congress workers I do not know personally. I never meet them. My correspondence has to be restricted as much as possible. Therefore, unless Congressmen almost instinctively perceive the duty and the necessity of the preliminary inaction I am prescribing, my guidance will be not only useless but harmful. It will create confusion.

"I hold the opinion strongly that whilst by their own action the British Government have made it impossible for the Congress to

co-operate with them in the prosecution of the war, the Congress must not embarrass them in its prosecution. I do not desire anarchy in India. Independence will never come through it. I do not wish for the defeat of the British or, for that matter, of the Germans. The peoples of Europe have been helplessly drawn into the war. But they will soon be awakened from their torpor. This war will not be a war to the finish, unless the whole of modern civilization is to perish. Be that as it may, holding the views I do, I am in no hurry to precipitate civil disobedience. My prescription to Congressmen, for the time being, is to consolidate the organization by purging it of all weaknesses. I swear by the old constructive programme of communal unity, removal of untouchability and the charkha. It is quite clear that non-violence is impossible without the first two. If India's villages are to live and prosper, the charkha must become universal. Rural civilization is impossible without the charkha and all it implies, that is, the revival of village crafts. Thus the charkha is the symbol *par excellence* of non-violence. And it can occupy the whole of the time of all Congressmen. If it makes no appeal to them, either they have no non-violence in them or I do not know the ABC of non-violence. If my love of the charkha is a weakness in me, it is so radical as to make me unfit as a general. The wheel is bound up with my scheme of swaraj, indeed with life itself. All India should know my credentials on the eve of what can become the last and decisive battle for swaraj."

The next day, on the way to Delhi, Gandhi wrote an article on "The Congressman":

"The Congressman seems to have become a distinct species. The various groups who make up the Congress organization have one thing in common. They are nationalists to the core. They will die for India's independence, as they are living for it. They have made nationalism part of their religion, whether they are Hindus, Muslims, Christians or any other.

"At present the Congress contains, besides those who need no other label but that of being Congressmen, socialists, communists, kisan sabhaites, trade unionists, Congress nationalists, the Royists, ex-terrorists, the so-called Gandhi-ites, etc. I have not intentionally omitted any group. Some of these have sub-divisions. The Forward Bloc is an amalgam. Its other name is leftists. As the Congress movement spreads, it may throw up other groups. But all of them

have one thing in common: the burning passion for freedom and readiness to die for it.

"It is true that the vast majority of Congressmen are Hindus. But they stand apart from other Hindus as we have found in the south during the campaign for temple entry. The sanatanists, who I think and hope are a handful, have fought the reformers who are mostly Congressmen and have denounced the latter as traitors to their religion. The Hindu Mahasabha too is becoming a protest against the Congress. Some of its members use about the Congress language calculated to create contempt for it. They regard the Hindus who belong to the Congress as enemies of Hinduism. The Muslims who belong to the Congress are almost outcastes.

"That the Congressman stands for Complete Independence, for bold social reform and for broad tolerance, has a brilliant record for suffering and sacrifice, is a matter for legitimate satisfaction. The formation of different groups in a mass organization like the Congress is inevitable and may be a distinct sign of progress and life. But if it is so, why are there communal quarrels, why do the Mahasabhaites distrust the Congress Hindus, why do not men and women belonging to all faiths flock to the Congress banner, and last but not least, is it all well with the groups themselves which I have mentioned?

"Let us examine their condition. Are they centripetal or centrifugal? Do they strengthen the organization or do they weaken it? Are they not bidding for power? Don't they distrust one another? Do they submit to discipline?

"I am not able to give a flattering answer to all these questions. I am afraid that these groups contain in themselves the seeds of the decay of the Congress. The cause that accounts for weakness within the Congress ranks is also the cause that accounts for the Congress failure to draw all communities to its ranks.

"That cause is the absence of a living faith in non-violence in thought, word and deed.

"Now, therefore, is the time for every one of us to test the efficacy or otherwise of non-violence. One false step by the Congress at this stage of its career is bound to retard the country's progress towards its goal. Strange as it may appear to Congressmen, I make bold to suggest that the one way to disarm communal suspicion is not to offer civil disobedience in terms of swaraj. The prospect that

is about to face the country is that of the British Government in alliance with the so-called minorities arrayed against the Congress single-handed. And civil disobedience against this combination is a contradiction in terms. It would not even be civil war. It would be criminal war.

"If the Congressmen, whether labelled or unlabelled, do not subscribe to non-violence as I have been developing it in these columns, and do not appreciate the instructions issued by Rajendra Babu and the advice I have tendered in *Harijan*, they should signify in writing their discontent to Rajendra Babu and tell him what they would like him to do and, if he can't comply with their wishes, what they would themselves do. It must be clear to every Congressman that this is no time for divided counsels, indecision, or half-hearted obedience to instructions. For decisive action, the whole Congress has to move forward in confidence and with one mind."

Spin For Swaraj

1939

On November 1, 1939, Gandhi, Rajendra Prasad and Jinnah had a joint interview with the Viceroy to discuss the British Government's proposal for expanding the executive council. The Congress leaders declined to consider any steps to further co-operation, unless the policy of the British Government was made clear in a declaration on the lines suggested by the Congress, and they protested against the communal question being dragged in, so as to cloud the main issue. The communal question, they said, would be dealt with by the constituent assembly. The British interference in the matter had only made a settlement more difficult. This attitude on the part of the Congress leaders, asserted Jinnah, precluded any discussion between them and him.

Thus the deadlock was created and the Viceroy came out with a statement on November 5. Gandhi's comment was:

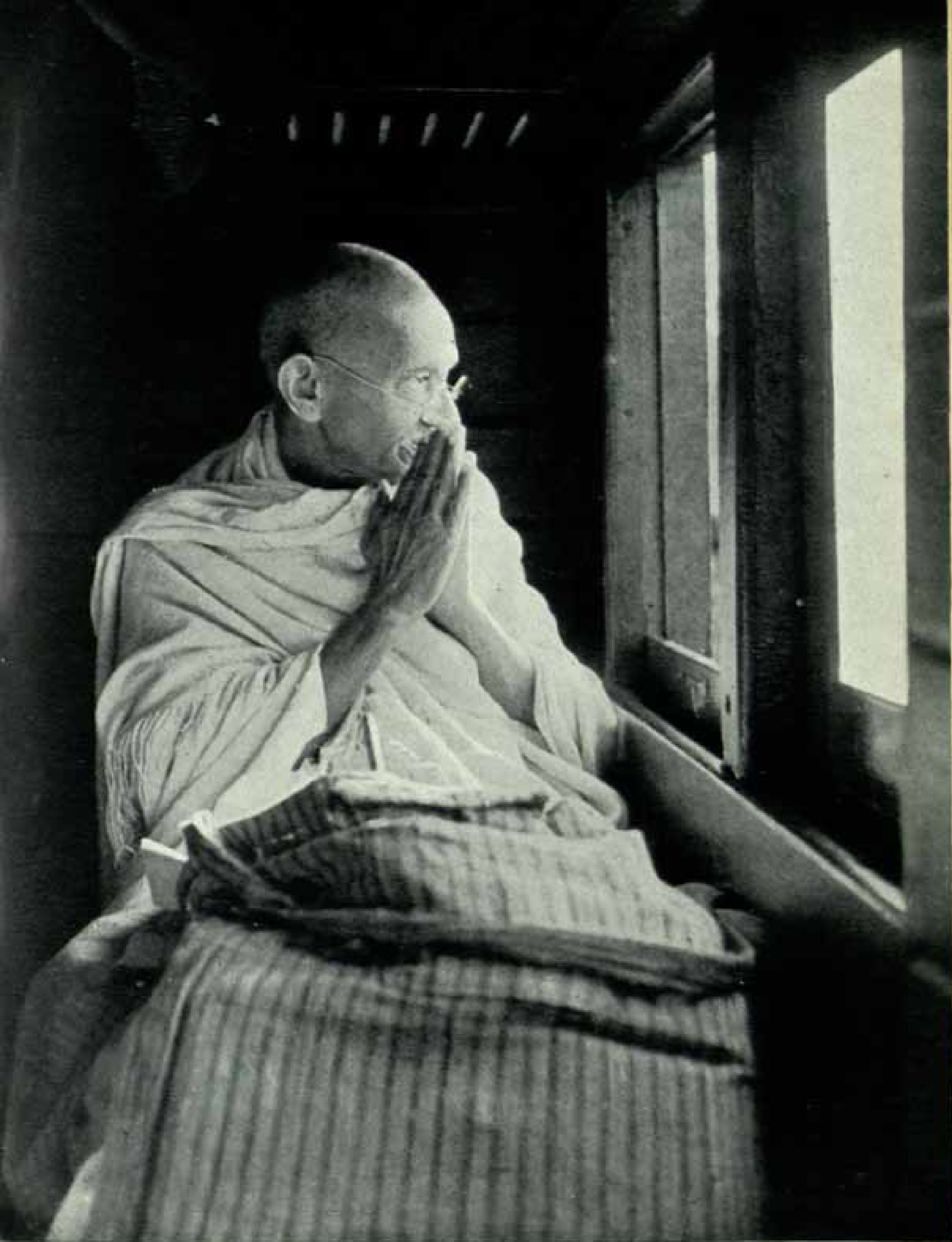
"I have read with respectful attention the Viceroy's broadcast and his introductory remarks on the correspondence between himself and Shri Rajendra Prasad and Jinnah Saheb released by His Excellency. I welcome His Excellency's refusal to accept defeat and his determination to solve what seems to have become insoluble. I share to the fullest extent His Excellency's anxiety to reach a solution. And, therefore, without waiting for the Congress reaction to these two declarations and purely for the sake of assisting the common cause, I would like to suggest that no solution is possible unless an acceptable declaration of the war aims about India is forthcoming. The pronouncements hitherto made, whether here or in Great Britain, are after the old style, suspected and discredited by freedom-loving India. If imperialism is dead, there must be a clear break with the past. Language suited to the new era has to be used. If the time has not yet come for the acceptance of this fundamental truth, I would urge that further effort at reaching a



From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Gandhi and Jinnah on their way to see the Viceroy, Delhi, November 1, 1939

Manuscript of Gandhi's article in *Harijan*, "My Life", dated November 4, 1939

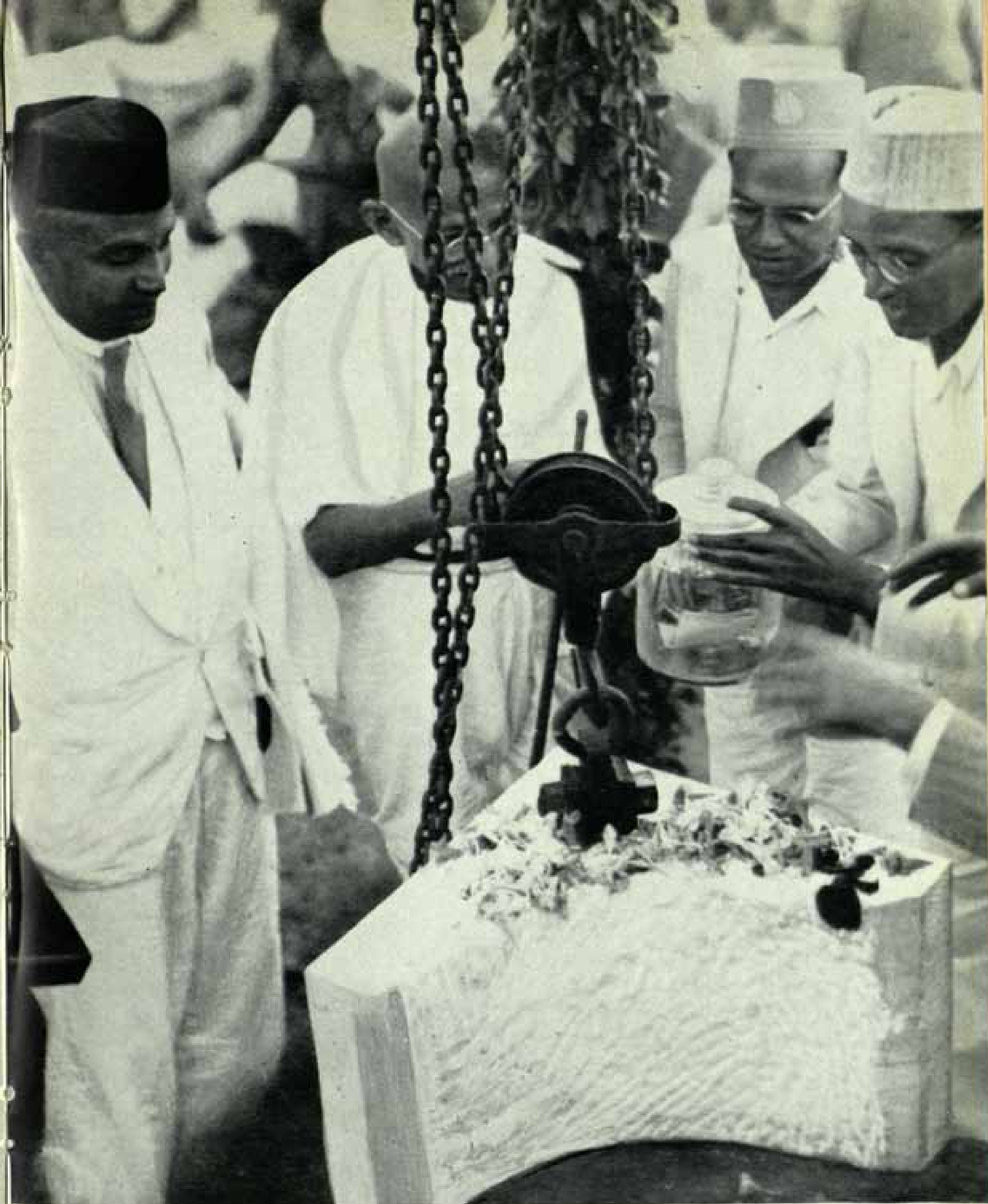


Photograph: Kanu Gandhi

Gandhi greeting the crowd from a railway compartment, on the way to Allahabad, November 1939

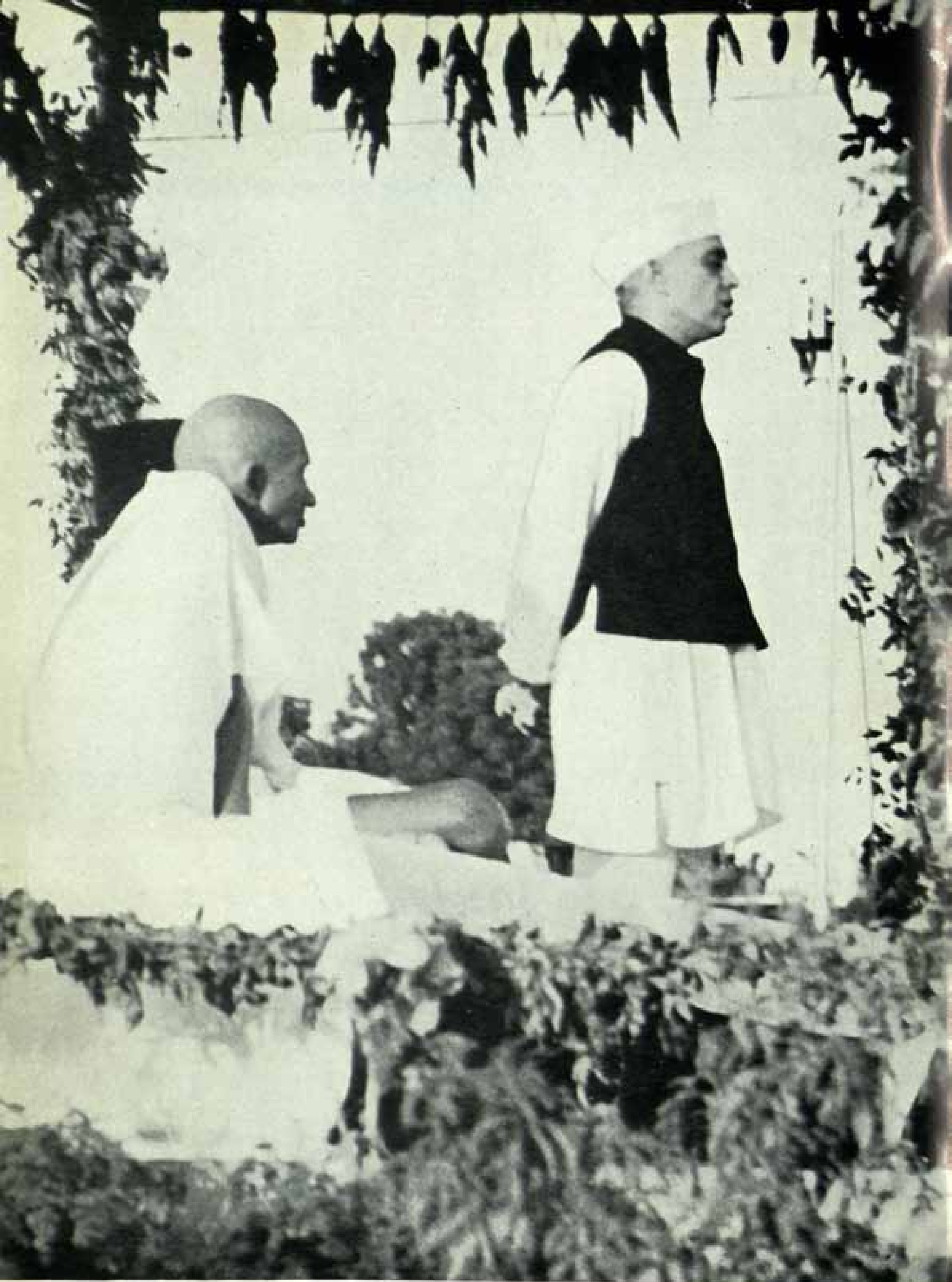


Gandhi performing the ceremony of laying the corner-stone of



From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Kamala Nehru Memorial Hospital, Allahabad, November 19, 1939



From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Jawaharlal Nehru addressing the audience after laying the corner-stone of Kamala Nehru Memorial Hospital, November 19, 1939

Photograph : Jawaharlal Nehru

Gandhi at rest and work, Anand Bhawan, Allahabad, November 1939



ANAND BHAWAN
ALLAHABAD

Courtesy : P. D. Tandon

Gandhi's letter of appreciation to a barber : "Munnilal has given me a fine shave with devotion. His razor is country-made and he shaves without soap." Allahabad, November 23, 1939

solution should be suspended. In this connection, I would remind British statesmen that what is wanted is a declaration of Britain's intention regarding her Indian policy irrespective of India's wishes. A slave-holder, who has decided to abolish slavery, does not consult his slaves whether they desire freedom or not.

"Once a declaration to free India from bondage, not in stages but at once, is made, an interim solution will be found to be easy. Protection of rights of the minorities will then become simple. The game of seesaw will cease. The minorities are entitled to protection not in stages, but to the fullest extent and in one single step. No charter of freedom will be worth looking at, which does not ensure the same measure of freedom for the minorities as for the majority. The minorities will be full-fledged partners in the framing of the constitution. How that can be attained will depend on the wisdom of the representatives charged with the sacred duty of preparing the constitution. Britain has hitherto held power—this is inevitable in any system of imperialism—by playing the minorities against the so-called majority, and has thus made an agreed solution among the component parts wellnigh impossible. The burden of finding a formula for the protection of the minorities should be thrown on the parties themselves. So long as Britain considers it her mission to bear this burden, so long will she continue to feel the necessity of holding India as a dependency. And the patriots impatient for deliverance will fight, non-violently if I can guide them, and violently if I fail and perish in the attempt. God's curse of this war, I had hoped and, still hope, would be turned into a blessing by Britain realizing that the one thing needful for her to justify and hasten the end of this war was to free a great and ancient country like India from her yoke.

"Believing as I do in the Viceroy's sincerity, I would urge fellow workers not to lose patience. There can be no civil resistance so long as, first, the Viceroy is exploring the possibilities of a settlement, secondly, the Muslim League blocks the way, and thirdly, there is indiscipline and disunity in the Congress ranks.

"The second condition should not offend the Muslim friends. So long as there is no workable arrangement with the Muslim League civil resistance must involve resistance against the League. But no Congressman can be party to it. I observe that my note in *Harijan* has shocked Jinnah Saheb. I am sorry for it. But at this stage, I

would not defend myself. I do not want to mar in any way the negotiations between him and Pandit Nehru which I hope will be resumed soon and pray will lead to communal peace."

Gandhi sent the following message to the British people through *News Chronicle* on November 14:

"I observe that the main issue between Britain and India is being confused in the British press. Does Britain intend to recognize India as an independent nation or must India remain Britain's dependency? This question has not been raised by the Congress to gain an advantage over Britain, but to enable the people of India to decide how they should behave during the world crisis. The issue thus becomes purely moral, for, owing to her material and military control of India, Britain is able to regulate the Indian and British garrison and drain India's wealth at her will. Eight provinces out of eleven have said in most emphatic language that they cannot participate in the war, if it does not mean, among the other things, India's complete freedom. All other issues are subordinate. The question of the minorities is purely a domestic one for the majority and the minorities to settle themselves. The proposed constituent assembly is the only body that can evolve a proper and lasting solution. Any other solution can only be a makeshift carrying no popular sanction. To fling the question of the minorities in India's face is to confuse issues. To raise the question of the princes is still more untenable. They are part of the paramount power. It is painful to think that the British statesmen do not so much as mention the millions of people of the states. Have they no voice in their own government? Are they to remain serfs, which they now are, though they are dragged into the war? No wonder Herr Hitler has challenged the British Government to prove her sincerity by recognizing India as a free nation. Whatever may be his intention in issuing the challenge, it cannot be denied that it is pertinent. Anyway, let the British public know that the Congress demand is unequivocal and capable of being satisfied, if there is the will to shed imperialism. If there is to be a fight between Britain and the Congress, the world should know clearly what it is to be for."

In mid-November, the A.-I.C.C. met in Allahabad to discuss the situation. Neither the claims of the minorities nor those of the princes, the committee declared, were a genuine obstacle to granting the Congress demand for national independence. The British

Government were "taking shelter under irrelevant issues" in order to "maintain her imperialist domination in India". The resolution put the constituent assembly in the forefront of the Congress programme as "the only democratic method of determining the constitution of a free country" and the only "adequate instrument for solving the communal and other difficulties". The Congress, however, kept the door open for negotiation.

The Working Committee expressed gratification at the readiness exhibited by Congressmen for the launching of civil disobedience "should this become necessary". But civil disobedience required perfect discipline. The true test of preparedness lay in Congressmen carrying out the constructive programme.

In *Harijan* dated November 25, Gandhi gave his full support to the Congress demand for the constituent assembly. In an editorial, "The Only Way," he wrote:

"Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru has compelled me to study, among other things, the implications of a constituent assembly. When he first introduced it in the Congress resolutions, I reconciled myself to it because of my belief in his superior knowledge of the technicalities of democracy. But I was not free from scepticism. Hard facts have, however, made me a convert and, for that reason perhaps, more enthusiastic than Jawaharlal himself. For, I seem to see in it a remedy, which Jawaharlal may not, for our communal and other distempers, besides being a vehicle for mass political and other education.

"The more criticism I see of the scheme, the more enamoured I become of it. It will be the surest index to the popular feeling. It will bring out the best and the worst in us. Illiteracy does not worry me. I would plump for unadulterated adult franchise both for men and women, that is, I would put them all on the register of the voters. It is open to them not to exercise it, if they do not wish to. I would give separate vote to the Muslim; but, without giving the separate vote, I would, though reluctantly, give reservation, if required, to every real minority according to its numerical strength.

"Thus, the constituent assembly provides the easiest method of arriving at a just solution of the communal problem. Today, we are not able to say with a mathematical precision who represents whom. Though the Congress is admittedly the oldest representative

organization on the widest scale, it is open to political and semi-political organizations to question, as they do often question, its overwhelmingly representative character. The Muslim League is undoubtedly the largest organization representing the Muslims, but several other Muslim bodies—by no means all insignificant—deny its claim to represent them. But the constituent assembly will represent all communities in their exact proportion. Except it, there is no other way of doing full justice to the rival claims. Without it, there can be no finality to communal and other claims.

"Again the constituent assembly alone can produce a constitution indigenous to the country and truly and fully representing the will of the people. Undoubtedly such a constitution will not be ideal, but it will be real, however imperfect it may be in the estimation of the theorists or the legal luminaries. Self-government to be self-government has merely to reflect the will of the people who are to govern themselves. If they are not prepared for it, they will make a hash of it. I can conceive the possibility of a people fitting themselves for right government through a series of wrong experiments, but I can't conceive a people governing themselves rightly through a government imposed from without, even as the fabled jackdaw could not walk like a peacock with feathers borrowed from his elegant companion. A diseased person has a prospect of getting well by personal effort. He cannot borrow health from others.

"The risks of this experiment are admitted. There is likely to be impersonation. Unscrupulous persons will mislead the illiterate masses into voting for the wrong men and women. These risks have to be run, if we are to evolve something true and big. The constituent assembly, if it comes into being—as I hope it will—as a result of an honourable settlement between us and the British people, the combined wit of the best men of the two nations will produce an assembly that will reflect fairly truly the best mind of India. Therefore, the success of the experiment at the present stage of India's history depends upon the intention of the British statesmen to part with power without engaging India in a deadly unorganized rebellion. For, I know that India has become impatient. I am painfully conscious of the fact that India is not yet prepared for non-violent civil disobedience on a mass scale. If I cannot persuade the Congress to await the time when non-violent action is possible, I have no desire to live to see a dog-fight between the two communities.

And I know for certain that, if I cannot discover a method of non-violent action or inaction to the satisfaction of the Congress and there is no communal adjustment, nothing on earth can prevent an outbreak of violence resulting for the time being in anarchy and red ruin. I hold that it is the duty of all communities and Englishmen to prevent such a catastrophe.

"The only way out is a constituent assembly. I have given my own opinion on it, but I am not tied down to the details. When I was nearly through with this article, I got the following telegram from Syed Abdulla Brelvi: 'Considerable misapprehensions among minorities (about) constituent assembly. Strongly urge clarification details, franchise, composition, methods arriving decision.' I think that I have said sufficient in the foregoing to answer Syed Saheb's question. By minorities, he has the Muslims principally in mind as represented by the Muslim League. If once the proposition that all communities desire a charter of independence framed by a constituent assembly and that they will not be satisfied with anything else is accepted, the settling of the details surely becomes easy. Any other method must lead to an imposed constitution mostly undemocratic. It would mean an indefinite prolongation of the imperialistic rule sustained by the help of those who will not accept the fully democratic method of a constituent assembly.

"The principal hindrance is undoubtedly the British Government. If they can summon a round table conference, as they propose to do after the war, they can surely summon a constituent assembly subject to safeguards to the satisfaction of minorities. The expression 'satisfaction of minorities' may be regarded as vague. It can be defined beforehand by agreement. The question thus resolves itself into whether the British Government desire to part with power and open a new chapter in their own history. I have already shown that the question of the princes is a red herring across the path. European interests are absolutely safe, so long as they are not in conflict with 'the interests of India'. I think this expression finds place in the Irwin-Gandhi pact.

"Look at the question from any standpoint you like, and it will be found that the way to democratic swaraj lies only through a properly constituted assembly, call it by whatever name you like. All resources must, therefore, be exhausted to reach the constituent assembly before any direct action is thought of. A stage may be reached when

direct action may become the necessary prelude to the constituent assembly. That stage is not yet."

A special feature of the Working Committee's resolution, at its Allahabad session, was the insistence on regular spinning and constructive work as an indispensable condition for launching of any movement. In this respect, Gandhi made a pointed appeal to the women: "The salt campaign brought out tens of thousands from their seclusion and showed that they could serve the country on equal terms with men. It gave the village woman a dignity which she had never enjoyed before. The restoration of spinning to its central place in India's peaceful campaign for deliverance from the imperial yoke gives her women a special status. In spinning, they have a natural advantage over men. The fact stands, at any rate in India, that millions of women regard spinning as their natural occupation. And the Working Committee's resolution automatically shifts the burden from men to women and gives to the women an opportunity of showing their mettle. I would love to find that my future army contained a vast preponderance of women over men. If the fight came, I should then approach it with much greater confidence than if men predominated. I would dread the latter's violence. But the women would be my guarantee against such an outbreak."

The Working Committee meeting over, Nehru invited Gandhi to meet the principal workers in U.P. His talks with them covered a wide range of subjects, and they were in the form of questions and answers.

Question: "You seem to be placing an exaggerated emphasis on non-violence today. Surely, you will not suggest that we were more ready or more non-violent in 1920-1 and in 1930? Or will you say that your standard has now gone up?"

Answer: "Both. There was not then so much violence as is to be seen on the surface today. And my standard too has gone up. I was not so rigid in my conditions then as I am now. If you accept my generalship, you have to accept not only my conditions but my judgement, as to whether we are ready or not. It is quite likely that there is really no difference between the conditions of those days and of today; but it is equally true that I did not know then that I was walking on a mine, I am haunted by that consciousness today and I cannot help it."

Question: "Is there not a fear that, if we do not strike the iron while it is hot, we may never be able to do so at all? There is that psychology of readiness among the people. If we do not seize the opportunity, their enthusiasm may be damped and their readiness may vanish. The best thing, therefore, today is for you to suggest a programme, whereby we may prepare the field and yet keep up the spirit of the people."

Answer: "I have always been impatient of this kind of language. I cannot understand a readiness which would vanish, if it was not availed of at once. That is no readiness at all. Ready is he who is ready at all times and at all places—whenever and wherever he is called. The only meaning of readiness is readiness to carry out the command of the general. To use the military language, we should be so prepared as to make war unnecessary. What is essential is the attainment of independence, not the time and the ways and the means of civil disobedience. I expect from you enough faith and discipline to instinctively await and obey your general's word. Don't expect me to say anything more. Don't expect me to reveal how, if ever, I shall launch civil disobedience. I have nothing up my sleeve, and I will have no knowledge until the last moment. I am not made that way. I knew nothing of the salt march, until practically the moment it was decided upon. This I know that God has rarely made me repeat history and He may not do so this time. There is one thing, however, I may, for reasons you may not reveal to me, be unfit as a general. In that case, you must give me up, and I shall not in the least be sorry for it.

"Now for the last point in your question. You want a programme which may be directly connected with civil disobedience. If you will not laugh at me, I will unhesitatingly say, it is the programme of universal spinning. Listening to the alarms and the advice of the doctors, I had given it up for some time. I began it in response to Narandas Gandhi's call and I do not think I shall ever give it up, until, of course, my hands are paralysed. So I would say that the more you spin, the better soldiers you will be. If that is my conviction, why should I be ashamed of declaring it? There cannot be two parts in my advice, one of which you may accept and the other you may reject. My condition is a vital one. It is likely that there may not be the necessary intellectual conviction, but it will follow faith as a necessary consequence. I say this because I have

acted in that spirit. I have marched miles upon miles, through bush and briar and along unbeaten tracks, acting on the word of command, during the Zulu Rebellion.

"But as I have said, the whole thing may strike you as chimerical or quixotic. In that case, you have to give up my leadership. I have led for twenty years and it may be well for me to rest on my oars. It is possible that you may be able to evolve some new technique of satyagraha. In that case, the moment I am convinced I shall be ready to follow you. Whatever you do, do not accept my leadership with a mental reservation. You will, by doing so, betray both me and the country. If I get your co-operation, it must be full and hearty. I have argued the thing for twenty years; I can advance no fresh argument now."

Question: "But we have proceeded on an altogether different ideology."

Answer: "Well, there is the rub. That is why I am repeating again and again my suggestion of a change in the leadership."

Question: "But if the charkha is with some of us a symbol of your leadership and nothing more?"

Answer: "No, it must be a symbol of non-violence and a specific condition of preparation for a non-violent struggle. I would suggest even a better course—a course I suggested in 1934. Banish khadi and spinning from the Congress programme, so that automatically I drop out. If you do so, the mistake will not be yours but mine. For, it is my duty to convince you that there is a vital connection between the charkha and non-violence."

Question: "In view of the little time at our disposal, could you tell us what you would regard as the minimum preparation necessary from the point of view of spinning?"

Answer: "Why little time? Is it essential that we should start the movement in three months or six months? Let it take six years. What is essential is the preparation. I would ask you to get rid of impatience. The test for me is not a formal spinning, by you for half an hour or even an hour a day, in order to satisfy me or to secure my leadership, but the universalization of spinning, so that there may be no mill cloth, indigenous or foreign, in your province. If I feel that we have made rapid strides in that direction, I shall be satisfied. You boast of several hundred thousand Congress members. If all of these took up the programme and became

voluntary workers on behalf of the A.-I.S.A. there would be no mill cloth in the province. It should be part of your daily life. Just as an Afridi cannot do without his rifle, even so every one of you non-violent soldiers should not be able to do without your spinning. And all this, not because this old man wants it, but because you want independence. When you realize this, you will not come to me with questions like the one you have asked."

Commenting on the talks with the U.P. workers, Gandhi wrote on November 28:

"I had expected that the talks would result in a parting of the ways. For, among the Congressmen whom I was facing, there were some who had laughed at the charkha and non-violence. But to my utter astonishment I found them reconciled to both. It is a baffling situation both for Congressmen and me.

"I do not know whether I am wise in bearing the heavy responsibility of leading Congressmen who only the other day had no faith in me. Are they not paying too great a price for my leadership in a battle? If they render obedience without faith, is it good for them or me? Can I lead them to success? If I was not good enough in peace, how can I be good in war? There was no peace. The Congress is at war with Great Britain, till independence is won. War had never ceased, only civil disobedience had been suspended for better and greater preparation. Congressmen who did not obey instructions during the preparatory period, were certainly not fit soldiers on active duty. And yet I could not distrust the responsible men who faced me in Allahabad. What is true of them is true of the other Congressmen in other provinces. And so, I am shouldering the burden.

"Let me then think aloud. I hope that Congressmen will make it a point to read *Harijan*, as if it was a weekly bulletin containing instructions for them.

"To the impatient Congressmen I say that I see no immediate prospect of declaring civil disobedience. There can be no civil disobedience only for the sake of embarrassing Great Britain. It will come, when it becomes clearly inevitable. Probably it will come by the goading of the official world. I do not doubt the honesty of the Viceroy or that of the Secretary of State. At the same time, I have no doubt whatsoever that they are in error, because they cannot get out of the old rut to which they are used. We must do

real propaganda by way of educating the public, both here and abroad. We cannot, all of a sudden, dispel the surrounding misunderstandings, not merely on the part of the British people but of our own countrymen. There is no mistaking the fact that many non-Congress Muslims honestly think that the Congress ministers did not pay enough heed to the Muslim complaint. Congressmen wedded to non-violence have to give special heed to the complaints of non-Congress Muslims. It is no use saying that they are frivolous. But we have to be patient and courteous enough to take them seriously and endeavour to show clearly that they are frivolous. I do not wish to suggest here that pains were not taken to deal with them. I am just now concerned with the phenomenon that the complaints persist. We must, therefore, give time to demonstrating that there never has been anything in the complaints. If in the course of further investigation we discover errors, we must make amends. We must prove to the Muslim countrymen and to the world that the Congress does not want independence at the sacrifice of a single legitimate interest, be it Muslim or other. We may leave no stone unturned to carry the minorities with us. This meticulous care for the rights of the least among us is the *sine qua non* of non-violence.

"If it is true, as it is, that for the Government to plead want of communal unity as a bar to independence is wrong, it is equally handicap in our march towards swaraj. If we had the League and others with us, our demand would become irresistible.

"So much for the external difficulties. Not till we have given sufficient time to their solution, can we possibly think of civil disobedience.

"The internal weakness is no less great. I see a vital connection between the charkha and non-violence. Even as certain minimum qualifications are indispensable in a soldier in arms, so are certain other and even opposite qualifications indispensable in a non-violent soldier, that is, a satyagrahi. One of these latter is the adequate skill in spinning and its anterior processes. A satyagrahi occupies himself in productive work. There is no easier and better productive work for millions than spinning. What is more, it has been an integral part of the non-violent programme since its commencement. Civilization based on non-violence must be different from that organized for violence. Let not Congressmen trifle with

this fundamental fact. I repeat what I have said a thousand times that, if millions spun for swaraj and in the spirit of non-violence, there will probably be no necessity for civil disobedience. It will be a constructive effort such as the world has not witnessed before. It is the surest method of converting the 'enemy'.

"The Working Committee desired to appoint me as its sole representative to carry on the negotiations that may be necessary and to conduct the campaign of civil disobedience if they failed. It was a burden I could not carry. Being boxed up in Segaon, I have no direct touch with the people. I have no confidence, I should have none, in my unaided judgement requiring an accurate first-hand knowledge of many facts. I could only act with the constant guidance and direction of the Working Committee. But I shall not carry on negotiations to finality. I should be pleased, if I was relieved of the burden. But I shall not shrink from any responsibility, so long as I carry the confidence and affection of the Working Committee and Congressmen in general, and so long as I feel that I have the requisite qualifications."

Many English admirers complained that Gandhi had completely departed from his original position. He replied: "In offering my sympathy—I did not use the word 'support'—I had the same end in view that the Congress has. I put my position before the Working Committee. It could not honestly adopt it. Desiring independence, it could not take up any other attitude. The Congress position was as good from its own, as mine from my, premises. The Congress had a perfect right to know British intentions, if the British Government desired its help in the prosecution of the war. As a subject nation, India, if she was resolved upon securing her liberty, could not be expected willingly to help a dominant nation without knowing where she stood. If India was violently inclined and had the strength, she would be bound to take advantage of Britain's difficulty and declare her independence and defend it with arms if she was resisted. And she would have commanded admiration of the world, including Britain, for seizing the opportunity. But the Congress has chosen the better way—the way of non-violence, however diluted it is. I own too that India is not ready for armed revolt. But this is no matter of credit either for Britain or for India. India is too weak for armed revolt. Britain's connection has made her weaker. Her disarmament is a black chapter in British history.

"God has blessed me with the mission to place non-violence before the nation for adoption. For better or for worse, the Congress has adopted it, and for nineteen years the Congress, admittedly the most popular and most powerful organization, has consistently and to the best of its ability tried to act up to it. Hence the sting of forced disarmament has not been felt, as it would have been otherwise. It is futile to guess what it would have done, if it had not accepted non-violence as its chief means for the attainment of swaraj. The Congress has allowed itself to be judged from the non-violent standpoint. It is possible to question the propriety of the Congress attitude only from that standpoint. Judged according to the ordinary standard, the Congress stands fully justified in the attitude it has taken.

"I hope that the learned critic does not wish to suggest that as the Congress did not accept my position, I should have dissociated myself entirely from the Congress and refused to guide it. My association enables the Congress to pursue the technique of corporate non-violent action.

"The writer seems to cavil at the demand for independence as distinguished from dominion status. Surely India cannot be satisfied with anything less, if she is to rank as a free nation. I had thought that dominion status according to the Statute of Westminster was equivalent to independence. The expression dominion status has a special connotation. It refers to a commonwealth of whites who are themselves pillars of imperialism, engaged in exploiting the non-European races whom they regard as uncivilized. India free will be no party to such exploitation. But there is nothing to prevent free India from entering into an alliance with Britain for the protection of the freedom of all, whether black, brown or white. Therefore, if dominion status is less than independence, India cannot be satisfied with less. If it is synonymous with independence, then India has to choose how she would describe her status.

"The critic further condemns the Congress for not coming to terms with the Muslim League. It is a pity that even responsible Englishmen will not take the trouble to study the questions which they judge freely. The Congress has never given up the effort to solve the communal question. It is even now engaged in the difficult task. But it is wrong to use the Congress inability to reach a solution for keeping India from her destined goal. British officials

including Viceroys have admitted that they have ruled by following the policy of 'divide and rule'. The British established themselves by taking advantage of our internal quarrels and have remained by keeping them alive. It is unnecessary for my argument to prove that the policy is being followed deliberately.

"The British have made themselves believe that they are ruling because of our quarrels, and that they will gladly retire when we have ceased to quarrel. Thus they are moving in a vicious circle. The British rule must be permanent, if the adjustment of the communal quarrel is a condition precedent to India becoming independent. It is a purely domestic problem which we are bound to solve if we are to live at peace with one another. May I remind the critic and those who argue like him that only a short while ago it was said that, if the British withdrew, Hindus would be left to the mercy of the virile races from the north, that not a virgin would be safe or a monied man retain his wealth. Princes and Muslims who are able enough to protect themselves against the unarmed millions whom the Congress claims specially to represent, are now sought to be protected by the British bayonet against the latter!!! Be that as it may, the Congress must pursue its even course. It must work for communal unity in spite of odds against it. It is a plank in its programme. It is part of the non-violent technique.

"Another English critic has put the problem in a truer way. He says among other things: 'British people feel that Britain needs to carry the Muslim world with her at this time of immense struggle.' I have no difficulty in sympathizing with this position. Only let us clear the issues. Britain cannot afford to risk defeat for the sake of doing justice. This is just what an overwhelming number of Indians feel. The Congress, before it can offer ungrudging support to Britain, wants to feel sure that hers is absolutely just cause. The recent events have created a grave doubt about it. Absolute protection of the rights of minorities is a greater concern of the Congress than it ever can be of Britain. The Congress dare not seek and cannot get justice, if it is not prepared to do it itself. To be above suspicion is the only way open to non-violent organizations. But British policy may make a just solution impossible now."

Gandhi's work now increased. A special post office and telephone communication had to be installed at Segaon. One of the cables first despatched from Segaon was a message to *News Chronicle:*

"Mr. Chamberlain said, 'If imperialism means the assertion of racial superiority, suppression of political and economic freedom of other peoples, the exploitation of the resources of other countries for the benefit of an imperialist country, then I say these are not the characteristics of this country.' This is pleasing to the ear, but does not square with facts. The policy adopted in Kenya, the clove business in Zanzibar, Ottawa Pact, not to speak of the dominions which exploit the so-called uncivilized races of the earth, do not show as if the imperial spirit was dead. Coming nearer home, is the paramountcy over Indian princes consistent with even elementary democracy, let alone death of imperialism? Princes are made and unmade not for India's good. Millions of Indians remain under undiluted autocracy by reason of the paramountcy.

"Also I fail to see why Britain's intention about India should be dependent upon the Muslim, the Hindu or any other opinion. The only opinion that counts is India's opinion, not even the Congress opinion. India's opinion can only be ascertained by the free vote of her people. The only true and democratic method is to ascertain their will through adult suffrage or any agreed equivalent. So far as the Congress is concerned, the people of Princes' India should be represented precisely on the same footing as those of British India. The Muslims and other accepted minorities may be represented by separate electorate, if necessary, and in the exact proportion of their numbers. They will determine what is required for their protection. In all matters of common interest, a composite majority decision should prevail. If a better way than a constituent assembly can be found for knowing the will of the people, so far as I know, the Congress will accept it without hesitation. Neither the size of the country nor the illiteracy of the masses should be a bar against adult suffrage. The election campaign will itself be sufficient education for the purpose of broadly knowing the popular will.

"The declaration of British policy about India is a purely moral issue, for freedom-loving India has neither the will nor the right to know Britain's will about her. I am aware that Britain can impress men and money from India treated as her dependency, but she can get moral weight on her side only from an India conscious of her freedom. I am anxious as a friend of Britain bound by many personal ties, that she should come out victorious not because of her superiority in the use of arms but because of her will to be just

all along the line. She will then have the true friendship and sympathy of millions of people all over the world, who have become sick of the wanton waste of precious life and of the palpable lies disseminated to sustain greed and hunger for dominion."

In an editorial, "In God's Good Hands", Gandhi again made his position clear *vis-a-vis* the war:

"Even now, as then, I would not gain independence at the cost of non-violence. The critic might retort that, if the British Government made the required declaration, I would be helping the allies and thereby taking part in violence. The retort would be reasonable but for the fact that the additional help that Britain would gain from the Congress would be purely moral. The Congress would contribute neither men nor money. The moral influence would be used on the side of peace. I have already said in these columns that my non-violence does recognize different species of violence, defensive and offensive. It is true that in the long run the difference is obliterated, but the initial merit persists. A non-violent person is bound, when the occasion arises, to say which side is just. Thus, I wished success to the Abyssinians, the Spaniards, the Czechs, the Chinese and the Poles, although in each case I wished that they could have offered non-violent resistance. In the present case, if the Congress could justify the British case on the high ground professed by Mr. Chamberlain, India declared free would throw in her whole moral weight on the side of peace. The part I am playing is, in my opinion, strictly non-violent. There is no spirit of bargaining behind the Congress demand which itself is wholly moral. There is no desire to embarrass the Government. There is to be no precipitate civil disobedience. Care is being taken to meet every just objection to the Congress demand and to smooth every difficulty in the way of Great Britain making the requisite declaration. The greatest strain is being put upon the impatient Congressmen spoiling for a fight though non-violent. I myself want to be able to play an effective part in bringing peace nearer. I might be able to do so, if India becomes in fact an independent ally of Britain, though the legal process is delayed till the war is ended.

"But who am I? I have no strength save what God gives me. I have no authority over my countrymen, save the purely moral. If God holds me to be a pure instrument for the spread of non-violence in the place of the awful violence now ruling the earth,

He will give me the strength and show me the way. My greatest weapon is mute prayer. The cause of peace is, therefore, in God's good hands."

To a friendly critic, he wrote: "I cling to an old superstition, if it may be so called. When in doubt on a matter involving no immorality either way, I toss and actually read in it divine guidance. I have no other scientific basis. To attribute residuary powers to God, is a scientific mode in my opinion. In this crisis, too, I have resorted to a kind of toss. If I had my way, you know what would have happened. That was not to be. The Congress way was not only not immoral, for it, it was the only moral way. Hence I kept myself with the Congress. My object was and still is to push forth the non-violence way, as it was in my own proposal. If the British intention is pure, says the Congress, we plunge. The way to test the intention is to know the British mind about India. I fancy, I see the distinction between you and me. You as a westerner cannot subordinate reason, even if I will. You tempt the Lord God with your reason, I won't. As the Gita says: God is the fifth or the unknown, deciding factor."

Addressing the people, he said: "Those who believe that India can be free and her freedom retained only through non-violence will surely believe that non-violence on a small scale can only be observed by the masses being usefully and knowingly occupied for the sake of the country. What is that one thing which all can do easily without any capital worth the name and which in itself is calculated to soothe the nervous system? The answer unequivocally will be hand-spinning and its anterior processes. And it is indigenous to the soil. Millions can easily learn it, and its output is always current coin. If there were no mills, yarn would be as much valued as, say, ghee. The famine of yarn would be as much felt as that of staples. If the people have the will, they can produce their cloth without much labour.

"In the states of Europe, where war is a recognized institution, adult males are conscripted for military service for a given number of years. In a country that wants to defend itself and regulate its life without war preparation, the people have to be conscripted for productive national service. If the vital requirements of a country are produced through centralized industry, it will find it necessary to guard them even as a capitalist guards his treasures. A country

whose culture is based on non-violence will find it necessary to have every home as much self-contained as possible. Indian society was at one time unknowingly constituted on a non-violent basis. The home life, that is, the village, was undisturbed by the periodical visitations from barbarous hordes. Mayne has shown that India's villages were a congeries of republics. In them there were no ladies and gentlemen, or all were.

"Unless this argument is accepted by the Congressmen, I hold it to be impossible to establish non-violence that will be proof against temptation and stand true, no matter how heavy the odds may be against it. Without such non-violence, the country cannot put up a fight in which there is no going back and there is no defeat."

"Spin for swaraj" was his message to every Indian. "Let Congressmen know that I should have no confidence in myself or them to embark on direct action, even when other difficulties were overcome, unless I had proof positive of successful khadi work all over India. This is not possible without serious, sustained and intelligent effort on the part of the vast mass of Congressmen."

Gandhi appealed to the princes to realize the weakness of their position: "The small princes would do well to abdicate the powers they should never have possessed and the powers of the bigger ones should be regularized. No one in his widest imagination thinks that the people of the states will for ever remain what they are. They will fight for their rights either non-violently or violently. In any case, the princes cannot hold out against millions who have become conscious of their power, whether spiritual or physical."

"If the princes will not read the signs of the times," he added, "has the paramount power, which has 'rescued' or 'created' them, no duty towards the people of the states? The very word 'paramountcy' involves the final authority of the paramount power. The so-called treaties are not treaties between equals, but conditions and restrictions imposed upon those to whom they are given. They are so many grants made principally or wholly for the consolidation of paramountcy. Lawyers, no doubt, will be found who would argue that the treaties are solemn pledges which can be enforced by the princes. How can a dwarf enforce rights against a giant?"

"And those who accuse the Congress of bargaining with England when she is engaged in a life struggle," he added, "do not know what they are saying. Anyway, I can have no part in bargaining.

It is against my nature. India's birthright may not be recognized today. It will be when the time comes. But the issues must plainly be understood.

"I hold that in the nature of things, it is impossible for the Congress to negotiate with the princes directly. When the time has come it will be found that the paramount power will have negotiated on their behalf with the Congress or whoever can deliver the goods. The princes must not be used or allowed to impede the march of India to freedom, even as the I.C.S., a British creation, cannot be allowed to do so. Both are bulwarks of the empire, and both will either be found to yield willing assistance to free India, or will be disbanded. This is not said to offend them. It is the naked truth. When Britain has shed imperialism, at least so far as India is concerned, it will be discovered that these two arms of imperialism were no hindrance on England's path towards the right act.

"As I visualize the war at this stage, I see that it has not yet commenced with grim earnestness. Both the parties are discovering and inventing new methods of destruction, but both are, I hope, evading the terrible slaughter which must result from any serious impact between the two. Awful as the indiscriminate sinking of ships with the attendant loss of life is, it will be found to be insignificant compared to what will happen when the fight commences in right earnest. Meanwhile moral issues are being decided for the combatants, whether they will or no. I observe that British statesmen have now begun to confine the war aims to the freedom of European nations. Unless the war comes to an abrupt end, they will find it necessary to go back to the original aim of saving the world for democracy. This war, with the gigantic preparations it has necessitated, will force the parties to cover much wider moral ground than they have perhaps contemplated. The war, therefore, may ultimately be decided on moral issues. At any rate, the Congress, which has voluntarily disarmed itself and chosen the path of peace or non-violence, is engaged in bringing the moral issue to the forefront. And if it keeps patient, it may be its sheer insistence on the moral issues play an important part in preventing the impending holocaust. A clear perception of the problem of princes is a big part of the moral issue. I invite the princes and their advisers and, last but not least, the British statesmen to examine it dispassionately and without the old bias."

The attention of the whole nation now veered round the political and constitutional questions. The December meetings of the Hindu Mahasabha and the Liberals were no exceptions. The National Liberal Federation expressed its strong disapproval of the Viceroy's statement, deplored the present lack of responsible government at the centre, and urged that the act of 1935 should be amended, so that India could attain full dominion status at the conclusion of the war. At the Mahasabha session little was said about the war but a great deal about the Muslim menace to the peace and unity of India. A number of resolutions demanded *inter alia* the annulment of the Communal Award, the immediate enactment of a constitution for India based on dominion status and the Statute of Westminster, and the complete Indianization of the army.

The Muslim League acquiesced in the League ministries continuing their full participation in the war effort, but otherwise it made its co-operation with the Government conditional, on its refusal to agree to the Congress plan for the settlement of the future constitution. Jinnah sprang a surprise in the shape of Deliverance Day to be observed by the Muslims on Friday, December 22. He appealed to the Muslims to observe the day as one of thanksgiving that the Congress Governments had at last ceased to function. Meetings were to be held to celebrate the "day of deliverance" from "tyranny, oppression and injustice" during the last two and a half years when the Congress, it was alleged, did their best to flout the Muslim opinion, to destroy Muslim culture, and interfered with their religious and social life and trampled upon their political and their economic rights. While the Congress ministries were condemned, the Governors were requested to inquire into the alleged charges and grant redress.

Gandhi appealed to Jinnah to call off Deliverance Day. Jinnah argued that Gandhi had taken upon his shoulders the tremendous responsibility of being both the accuser and the judge. Vallabhbhai Patel repudiated all the allegations made by Jinnah. He stated that when the Muslim League through the Pirpur Committee first made the charges against Congress ministries, he instructed them to inquire into each allegation and submit a report. These reports showed that the charges were absolutely unfounded. Some months later, Rajendra Prasad, the Congress President, offered to submit the charges, if specified, to an independent tribunal for inquiry, but

Jinnah spurned the offer, stating that he had placed the charges before the Viceroy. When Jinnah had repeated the charges, the Sardar had instructed chief ministers to invite his Governor's attention to them as they were also affected by the charges, and he was informed that the Governors considered the charges as unwarranted. He was constrained to characterize the charges as wild, reckless and intended to endanger communal peace. The repetition of charges was the more deplorable in that Nehru and Jinnah were about to meet to explore the possibilities of a communal settlement.

Azad raised his voice against Deliverance Day: "And now, when the Congress has given up the government of the eight provinces of its own choice and free will, what advice has the League President to offer to the Muslims? It is this, that they should march towards the mosques and thank God on their deliverance from the Congress ministries, which have preferred duty to power, and have resigned not only on the issue of India's freedom, but for the rights of all the downtrodden peoples of the East. It is difficult to imagine that any group of Muslims, however at loggerheads with the Congress, would tolerate to be presented to the world in such colours."

The chorus of disapproval coming even from the Muslims made Jinnah change his position. He said that he had no quarrel with the Hindus. Deliverance Day was to be observed by the minorities who had all been oppressed by the Congress governments. Jinnah's statement created an embarrassing situation for the Nehru-Jinnah talks, which were ultimately abandoned.

At the end of December, the Congress Working Committee met at Wardha and reiterated its stand taken at its last meeting. The concluding part of the resolution stated: "Congressmen must have by now realized that independence is not to be won without very hard work. And since the Congress is pledged to non-violence, the final sanction behind it is civil resistance, which is but a part of satyagraha. Satyagraha means goodwill towards all and especially towards opponents. Therefore, it is the duty of individual Congressmen to promote and seek goodwill. The success of the programme of khaddar as an accepted symbol of non-violence, harmony and economic independence is indispensable. The Working Committee, therefore, hope that all Congress organizations will, by a vigorous prosecution of the constructive programme, prove themselves fit to take up the call when it comes."

The committee then adopted a resolution on the celebration of Independence Day, falling on January 26, 1940: "This celebration must, therefore, not only be the declaration of our national will for freedom, but a preparation for that struggle and a pledge to disciplined action. The committee hope that none who does not believe in the contents of the pledge will take it merely for the sake of form." The amended pledge was as follows:

"We recognize that the most effective way of gaining our freedom is not through violence. India has gained strength and self-reliance and has marched a long way to swaraj following peaceful and legitimate methods, and it is by adhering to these methods that our country will attain independence.

"We pledge ourselves anew to the independence of India and solemnly resolve to carry out non-violently the struggle for freedom till Purna Swaraj is attained.

"We believe that non-violent action in general, and preparation for non-violent direct action in particular, require successful working of the constructive programme of khadi, communal harmony and removal of untouchability. We shall seek every opportunity of spreading goodwill among fellow countrymen without distinction of caste or creed. We shall endeavour to raise from ignorance and poverty those who have been neglected and to advance interests of those who are considered to be backward and suppressed. We know that though we are out to destroy the imperialistic system, we have no quarrel with Englishmen, whether officials or non-officials. We know that the distinctions between the Caste Hindus and Harijan must be abolished, and Hindus have to forget these distinctions in their daily conduct. Such distinctions are a bar to non-violent conduct. Though our religious faiths may be different, in our mutual relations we will act as children of Mother India, bound by common nationality, common political and economic interest.

"Charkha and khadi are an integral part of our constructive programme for the resuscitation of the 700,000 villages of India and for the removal of the grinding poverty of the masses. We shall, therefore, spin regularly, use for our personal requirements nothing but khadi, and, so far as possible, products of village handicrafts only, and endeavour to make others do likewise.

"We pledge ourselves to a disciplined observance of the Congress principles and politics and to keep in readiness to respond to the

call of the Congress, whenever it may come, for carrying on the struggle for the independence of India."

Commenting on the pledge, Gandhi wrote:

"It is to be hoped that the Congressmen will learn by heart, not merely store up in their memory, the resolution of the Working Committee containing the pledge for January 26 next. The pledge was first taken in 1930. Ten years is not a short time. If Congressmen had honestly lived up to the constructive programme of 1920, there would be Purna Swaraj today. There would be communal harmony and there would be purification of Hinduism and smiling faces in India's villages. These together would produce such a momentum, that independence could not be resisted.

"But the painful fact must be admitted that Congressmen have not carried out the programme as they should have. They have not believed that the triple programme is non-violence in action. They have not believed that civil disobedience could not be successfully carried out without fulfilling it.

"Therefore, I have not hesitated to remark in these columns that our non-violence has been non-violent conduct born of impotence. Hence we witness the sorry spectacle of us confessing that, though this non-violence of the weak may bring us freedom from English rule, it cannot enable us to resist foreign invasion. This fact—and it is a fact—shows that, if the English yield to the non-violence, miscalled, of the weak, it would prove that they had almost made up their mind to surrender power and would not hold on to it at the cost of creating frightfulness. Congressmen should not be surprised, if I would not declare civil disobedience unless I was morally certain that they had understood the full significance of non-violence and that they were carrying out the triple programme with as much zest as they would offer civil disobedience, so called. They would perhaps now understand why I call the three items of the programme essentials of non-violence.

"What do I mean by the communal fellowship? How is it to be obtained when the Jinnah-Nehru talks have failed? They may or may not have failed. Pacts are meant for big people. They do not affect men in the street, the ground-down millions. In cultivating fellowship among these, written pacts are not needed. Do Congressmen cultivate goodwill towards all without political motive? This fellow-feeling should be natural, not born out of fear or expedience,

even as fellowship between the blood brothers, not being born out of any ulterior motive, natural, and lasting. Nor is it to be applied only as between the Hindus and the Muslims. It has to be universal. It must be extended to the least among us. It is to be extended to Englishmen. It is to be extended to political opponents. Removal of untouchability again has deep significance. The very idea of high and low among the Hindus should be rooted out. Caste solidarity should give place to national solidarity. In Congress ranks, these distinctions should be relics of the past.

"Then the charkha. For nearly twenty years now it has adorned the national flag which is made of khadi. And yet khadi has not become universal. Khadi having been adopted by the Congress, the Congressmen may not rest till it has penetrated every home in the remotest part of India. Only then will it become a mighty symbol of voluntary co-operation and one purpose. It is a symbol of identification with the poorest in the land. Hitherto, Congressmen have played with khadi. They have not believed in its message. They have used it often unwillingly, for mere show. It must become a reality, if true non-violence is to permeate us.

"Let the Congressmen note the preamble to the Working Committee's resolution on the pledge. Those who don't believe in it are not bound to take the pledge. And indeed, those who have not the belief, are bound not to take it. For, the pledge this time is to be taken for a definite purpose. A grave responsibility rests on my shoulders. A vast organization like the Congress will not move in the direction of civil resistance, unless I give the word. It is no matter of pride or joy to me. I should break under the weight of that responsibility, if I were not conscious of trust in my judgement which is dictated by the living law of Truth and Love which is God. God speaks through acts of men and women. In this case acts of Congressmen and Congresswomen have to speak."

Task Before Us

1940

THE LEFTISTS objected to the insistence on the spinning wheel in the Independence Pledge. Subhas Bose in a press statement said: "The political significance that is being given to spinning now and the manner in which it has been quietly converted by the Congress High Command into a method of political struggle need unequivocal condemnation, consequently the members of the Forward Bloc would be perfectly justified in organizing separate meetings and demonstrations on Independence Day."

In *Harijan* dated January 13, 1940, Gandhi wrote:

"I congratulate the socialists, the Royists and others who have spoken out their minds on spinning. The situation that faces the country is most serious. If civil resistance is declared in right earnest there should be no suspension, unless there is a proper settlement. It, therefore, follows that if the fight is to be non-violent, the non-violence must be unadulterated. I must not be weak in my statement of requirements. If I hesitate, I would betray the national cause. I dare not lead an army that does not answer the qualifications which I regard as essential for success.

"No half-hearted allegiance will do. Divided allegiance will lead to disaster. The critics should realize that I have not imposed myself on the Congress. I am no dictator, though I have been given that nickname by unkind friends. I have no sanction for imposing my will on any person. Therefore, I call myself truly a servant of the people. The public should know that I have not even been formally appointed Generalissimo. Not that the Working Committee would not give me the formal appointment. But I suggested and the members agreed that there was no necessity for it. Thus, if ever there can be a bond of unmixed love and confidence between a general and his men, this is such a one. There is nothing to prevent the Congress from ignoring me and passing any resolution it likes.

There is nothing so far as I am concerned to prevent any person or any province or district from declaring civil disobedience at his or its risk. They will be guilty of indiscipline towards the Congress. But I can do nothing in regard to such insubordination.

"Hence it should be unnecessary for me to argue out the case for spinning. It should be enough that it is the requirement that every satyagrahi has to fulfil.

"But I must continue to argue till I convert opponents or I own defeat. For my mission is to convert every Indian, even Englishmen and finally the world, to non-violence for regulating mutual relations whether political, economic, social or religious. If I am accused of being too ambitious, I should plead guilty. If I am told that my dream can never materialize, I would answer 'that is possible', and go my way. I am a seasoned soldier of non-violence, and I have evidence enough to sustain my faith. Whether, therefore, I have one comrade or more or none, I must continue my experiment."

Jayaprakash Narayan, a socialist leader, vehemently criticized the new pledge. "The spinning wheel abides," insisted Gandhi. On the "Dissentients", he wrote:

"Shri Jayaprakash Narayan and Shri Sampurnanand have both spoken in no uncertain terms against the addendum to the pledge to be taken on the 26th instant. I have great regard for them. I should count it a privilege to have them as companions in arms. I should love to win them over to my viewpoint. If the battle is to come and I am to lead it, I should not be able to do so with half-convinced or doubting lieutenants.

"I am not spoiling for a fight. I am trying to avoid it. Whatever may be true of the members of the Working Committee, I wholly endorse Subhas Babu's charge that I am eager to have compromise with Britain if it can be had with honour. Indeed, satyagraha demands it. Therefore, I am in no hurry. And yet, if the time came and I had no follower, I should be able to put up a single-handed fight. But I have not lost faith in Britain. Those, therefore, who work with me have to appreciate this side of me. Perhaps from the stand-point of the dissentients, this compromising nature of mine is a disqualification. If it is, the country should know it.

"Shri Jayaprakash Narayan has done well to clear his and the Socialist Party's position. He says of the constructive programme: 'We have never accepted it as the only or even as an adequately

effective weapon in our struggle. Our views regarding these matters have remained unchanged. Rather they have been strengthened by the helplessness of the national leadership in the present crisis. Let students come out of their schools and colleges on that day and let workers lay down their tools.'

"If the majority of Congressmen entertain the views that Shri Jayaprakash propounds on behalf of the Socialist Party, I never can hope to lead such an army to success. He has no faith either in the programme or in the present leadership. I suggest to him that he has quite unconsciously discredited the programme he would carry out merely 'because the nation's High Command desire it'. Imagine an army marching to battle without faith in the weapons to be used and in the leaders who have prescribed them. Such an army can only bring disaster to itself, its leaders and the cause. If I were in Shri Jayaprakash's place and if I felt able to tender discipline, I would advise my party to remain indoors and silent. If I could not, I would preach open revolt and frustrate the designs of an ineffective leadership. Again, Shri Jayaprakash would have the students come out of their colleges and schools and workmen lay down their tools. This is a lesson in indiscipline. If I had my way, I would invite every student to remain in his school or college unless he got leave or the principal decided to close the college or the school, in order to take part in the celebration. I should give similar advice to the workmen. Shri Jayaprakash complains that the Working Committee has given no details about the work to be done on Independence Day. I thought that with the programme of fraternizing and khadi there was no need for detailed instructions. I should expect Congress committees everywhere to arrange spinning demonstrations, khadi hawking, and the like. I observe that some committees are doing so. I had expected Congress committees to make preparations from the day the Working Committee resolution was published. I shall measure the strength of the nation's response not merely by the quantity of yarn spun but mainly by the khadi sales throughout the country.

"Finally, Shri Jayaprakash says: 'We advanced, for our part, a new programme, that of labour and peasant organization, as the foundation of a revolutionary mass movement.' I dread the language used. I have organized both but not perhaps in the way Shri Jayaprakash has in mind. The sentence demands further elucidation. If

they are not organized on a strictly peaceful footing, then they may damage the non-violent action, as they did during the Rowlatt Act satyagraha and later during the hartal in Bombay over the Prince of Wales's visit.

"Shri Sampurnanand has raised a spiritual issue. He thinks that the original pledge should not have been tampered with, though as he says, and rightly, it was discursive. I was its author. I wanted the people not merely to repeat the mantra of independence, but to educate the people as to its why and wherefore. It was amended later, when certain portions of the original had become meaningless. I admit the sacredness of the mantra of independence. It was given to us when the Lokamanya first uttered 'Swaraj is my birthright'. It was caught by thousands and is gaining strength from day to day. It is now enshrined in the hearts of millions. I hold that the addendum this year was necessary. It adds to the sacredness of the original and tells the people how everyone can contribute to the realization of national freedom.

"And I feel, therefore, that Shri Sampurnanand's objection really arises from his disbelief in constructive programme. Thus he says: 'If making it an integral part of the pledge means that we are definitely committing ourselves to a policy of village industries as opposed to mass production, then I, as a socialist, cannot accept it.' Of course, I cannot give the legal interpretation of the pledge. It can only be given by the Working Committee. But as the general responsible for declaring and conducting a non-violent war, I am bound to say that this mentality must interfere with mass propaganda. If khadi has not an abiding place in national programme, it should have no place in the addendum. And if there is anything more effective, it should be put before the nation. There need be no hush-hush policy, because a big fight is said to be impending. It is not necessary for all to be of one mind. But it is absolutely necessary that those who have to be in charge, as he would have to be, have a living faith in the programme they have to work out. No make-believe will answer the present requirements.

"It has been suggested to me by a Congressman wielding great influence, that, as soon as I declare civil resistance, I would find a staggering response this time. The whole labour world and the kisans in many parts of India will, he assures me, declare a simultaneous strike. I told him that, if that happened, I should be most

embarrassed and all my plan would be upset. I must confess that I have no positive plan in front of me. Let me say that God will send me the plan when He gives the word, as He has done before now. He has been my unfailing guide and has sustained me throughout my stormy life. This, however, I know that no plan that I may put before the country will admit of unregulated and sporadic strikes, because that must lead to violence and, therefore, the automatic suspension of the non-violent struggle. It would amount to my dismissal. I am sure that the socialist leaders and other dissentients do not expect me to embark on a struggle, which I know beforehand, is likely to end in disaster. I ask for lieutenants and men, who will act as one mind.

"Even if, somehow or other, we achieve nominal independence, we cannot conduct the national affairs with any degree of success unless we have won the struggle in the manner prescribed by me. Without real non-violence, there would be perfect anarchy. I hope I am not expected knowingly to undertake a fight that must end in anarchy and red ruin."

"Does Independence Pledge," asked Dr. Lohia, "necessitate belief in a social order for free India, which will be based exclusively on the charkha and the present constructive programme? I personally feel that it does not. The pledge is inclusive of the charkha and the village crafts, but it is not exclusive of other industries and the economic activities. Does the pledge immediately necessitate the abandonment of every other action, except such as is based on the present constructive programme? These two questions arise, in so far as the negative aspect of the pledge is concerned. A third one arises in regard to its positive aspect. It is undoubtedly necessary that anyone who takes the pledge must be ready to express his positive faith in the principle of decentralized economy."

Gandhi replied: "On the whole I can say that I have no difficulty in accepting Dr. Lohia's interpretation. For, whatever the ultimate outcome of the Congress effort, the discussion that is going on over the pledge provides healthy political education for the public and crystallizes the opinions that rule the various schools of thought in the country.

"Although I am in general agreement with Dr. Lohia, it will be well for me to give the interpretation in my own language. The pledge is not exhaustive. It represents the limit to which I could

carry the Working Committee with me. If I can convert the country to my point of view, social order of the future will be based predominantly on the charkha and all it implies. It will include everything that promotes the well-being of the villagers. I do visualize electricity, shipbuilding, ironworks, machine-making and the like existing side by side with village handicrafts. But the order of dependence will be reversed. Hitherto, industrialization has been so planned as to destroy the villages and village crafts. In the state of the future it will subserve the villages and their crafts. I do not share the socialist belief that centralization of the necessaries of life will conduce to the common welfare, when the centralized industries are planned and owned by the state. The socialistic conception of the West was born in an environment reeking with violence. The motive lying behind the western and eastern type is the same—the greatest welfare of the whole society and abolition of the hideous inequalities resulting in the existence of millions of have-nots and a handful of haves. I believe that this end can be achieved only when non-violence is accepted by the best mind of the world as the basis, on which a just social order is to be constructed. I hold that the coming into power of the proletariat through violence is bound to fail in the end. What is gained by violence must be lost before superior violence. India is within an ace of achieving the end, if only Congressmen will be true to their creed of non-violence and live up to it. The working of the constructive programme is the test. Those who play upon the passions of the masses injure them and the country's cause. That they have noble motives is irrelevant. Why will not Congressmen work out the programme fully and faithfully? It will be time to consider other programmes when we have come into our own. But like the fabled men who quarrelled over the division of the buffalo before it was bought, we argue and quarrel over our different programmes before swaraj has come. Decency requires that when a programme is approved by the majority all should carry it out faithfully.

"Most decidedly, the pledge does not necessitate the abandonment of the other items that have hitherto adorned the Congress programme and are adverted to by Dr. Lohia. Agitation against every form of injustice is the breath of political life. My contention is that divorced from the constructive programme, it is bound to have the tinge of violence.

"Let me illustrate my point. All my experiments in ahimsa have taught me that non-violence in practice means common labour with the body. A Russian philosopher Bondaref has called it bread labour. It means closest co-operation. The first satyagrahis of South Africa laboured for the common good and the common purse and felt free like birds. They included Hindus, Muslims (Shias and Sunnis), Christians (Protestants and Roman Catholics), Parsis and Jews. They also included the English and the Germans. By profession, they were lawyers, architects, engineers, electricians, printers, and traders. The practice of truth and non-violence melted the religious differences, and we learnt to see beauty in each religion. I do not remember a single religious quarrel in the two colonies I founded in South Africa. The common labour consisted of printing, carpentry, shoe-making, gardening, house-building, and the like. Labour was no drudgery, but it was a joy. The evenings were devoted to literary pursuits. These men, women and boys, were the vanguard of the satyagraha army. I could not wish for braver or more loyal comrades. In India, the South African experience was continued and, I trust, improved upon. Labour in Ahmedabad is by common consent the best organized in India. If it continues to work along the lines on which it began, it will ultimately own mills in common with the present holders. If that is not the natural outcome, its non-violence will be found to contain flaws. The peasants of Bardoli who gave Vallabhbhai the title of Sardar and won their battle, and of Borsad and Kheda who did likewise, have for years been working the constructive programme. They have not deteriorated as satyagrahis by working it. I am certain that Ahmedabad labour and the peasantry of Bardoli and Kheda will give as good an account of themselves as any other in India, if there is civil resistance.

"Thirty-four years of continuous experience and experimenting in truth and non-violence have convinced me that non-violence cannot be sustained, unless it is linked to conscious body labour and finds expression in our daily contact with our neighbours. This is the constructive programme. It is not an end, it is an indispensable means and, therefore, is almost convertible with the end. The power of non-violent resistance can only come from honest working of the constructive programme."

"I beg you to solve the problem of us," wrote a woman worker. "We need an additional set of principles, besides satyagraha and

ahimsa to overcome our baser qualities. Her nature, upbringing and surroundings always get in the way and hinder her and give occasion for the hackneyed phrase, 'She is only a woman after all.'" On the woman's role, Gandhi wrote:

"I had flattered myself that my contribution to woman's cause definitely began with the discovery of satyagraha. But the writer of the letter is of opinion that the fair sex requires treatment different from men. If it is so, I do not think any man will find the correct solution. No matter how much he tries, he must fail because nature has made him different from woman. Only the toad under the harrow knows where it pinches him. Therefore, ultimately, woman will have to determine with authority what she needs. My own opinion is that, just as fundamentally man and woman are one, their problem must be one in essence. The soul in both is the same. The two live the same life and have the same feelings. Each is a complement of the other. The one cannot live without the other's active life.

"But somehow or other man has dominated woman for ages past and, therefore, woman has developed an inferiority complex. She has believed in the truth of man's interested teaching, that she is inferior to him. But the seers among men have recognized woman's equal status.

"Nevertheless there is no doubt that, at some point, there is bifurcation. Whilst both are fundamentally one, it is also equally true that in the form there is a vital difference between the two. Hence the vocations of the two must also be different. The duty of motherhood, which the vast majority of women will always undertake, requires qualities which men need not possess. She is passive, he is active. She is essentially the mistress of the house. He is the breadwinner, she is the keeper and distributor of the bread. She is the care-taker in every sense of the term. The art of bringing up the infants of the race is her special and sole prerogative. Without her care, the race must become extinct.

"In my opinion, it is degrading both for man and woman that woman should be called upon or induced to forsake the hearth and shoulder the rifle for the protection of that hearth. It is a reversion to barbarity and the beginning of the end. In trying to ride the horse that man rides, she brings herself and him down. The sin will be on man's head, for tempting or compelling his companion

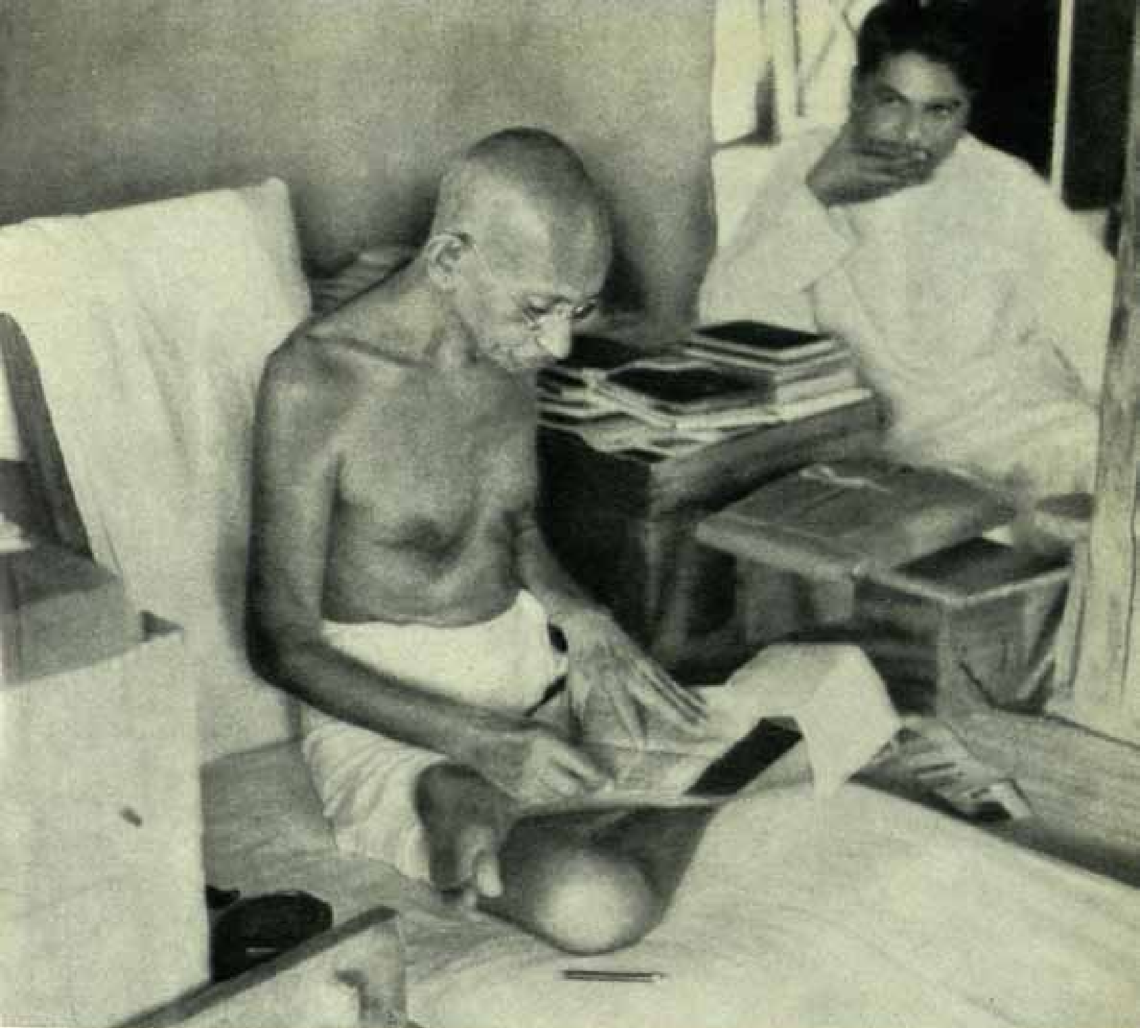
to desert her special calling. There is as much bravery in keeping one's home in good order and condition, as there is in defending it against attack from without.

"As I have watched millions of peasants in their natural surroundings and as I watch them daily in little Segaon, the natural division of spheres of work has forced itself on my attention. There are no women blacksmiths and no women carpenters. But men and women work on the fields, the heaviest work being done by the males. The women keep and manage the homes. They supplement the meagre resources of the family, but man remains the main bread-winner.

"The division of the spheres of work being recognized, the general qualities and the culture required are practically the same for both the sexes.

"My contribution to the great problem lies in my presenting for acceptance truth and ahimsa in every walk of life, whether for the individuals or nations. I have hugged the hope that in this woman will be the unquestioned leader and, having thus found her place in human evolution, will shed her inferiority complex. If she is able to do this successfully, she must resolutely refuse to believe in the modern teaching that everything is determined and regulated by the sex impulse. I do not know that the millions of men who are taking an active part in the war are obsessed by the sex spectre. Nor are the peasants working together in their fields worried or dominated by it. This is not to say or suggest that they are free from the instinct implanted in man and woman. But it most certainly does not dominate their lives, as it seems to dominate the lives of those who are saturated with the modern sex literature. Neither man nor woman has time for such things, when he or she is faced with the hard fact of living life in its grim reality. . .

"Woman is the incarnation of ahimsa. Ahimsa means infinite love, which again means infinite capacity for suffering. And who but woman, the mother of man, shows this capacity in the largest measure? She knows it as she carries the infant and feeds it during nine months and derives joy in the suffering involved. What can beat the suffering caused by the pangs of labour? But she forgets them in the joy of creation. Who again suffers daily, so that her babe may wax from day to day? Let her translate that love to the whole of humanity, let her forget that she ever was or can be the



Photograph : Kanu Gandhi

Gandhi perusing a document on swadeshi, Segaon, January 1940

सेगाँव
वर्धा होकर (मध्यप्रांत)

6 1 40

Telephone : 41 (Wardha)
SEGAON
VIA WARDHA (C.P.)

Dear Kamath,

You are in a hurry & there-
fore in worry because you have
not read the pledge carefully. It
is regular spinning that is wanted
not daily. I said because there is
nothing wrong in others spinning
this time. The real test is to be
whether khadi was used ...

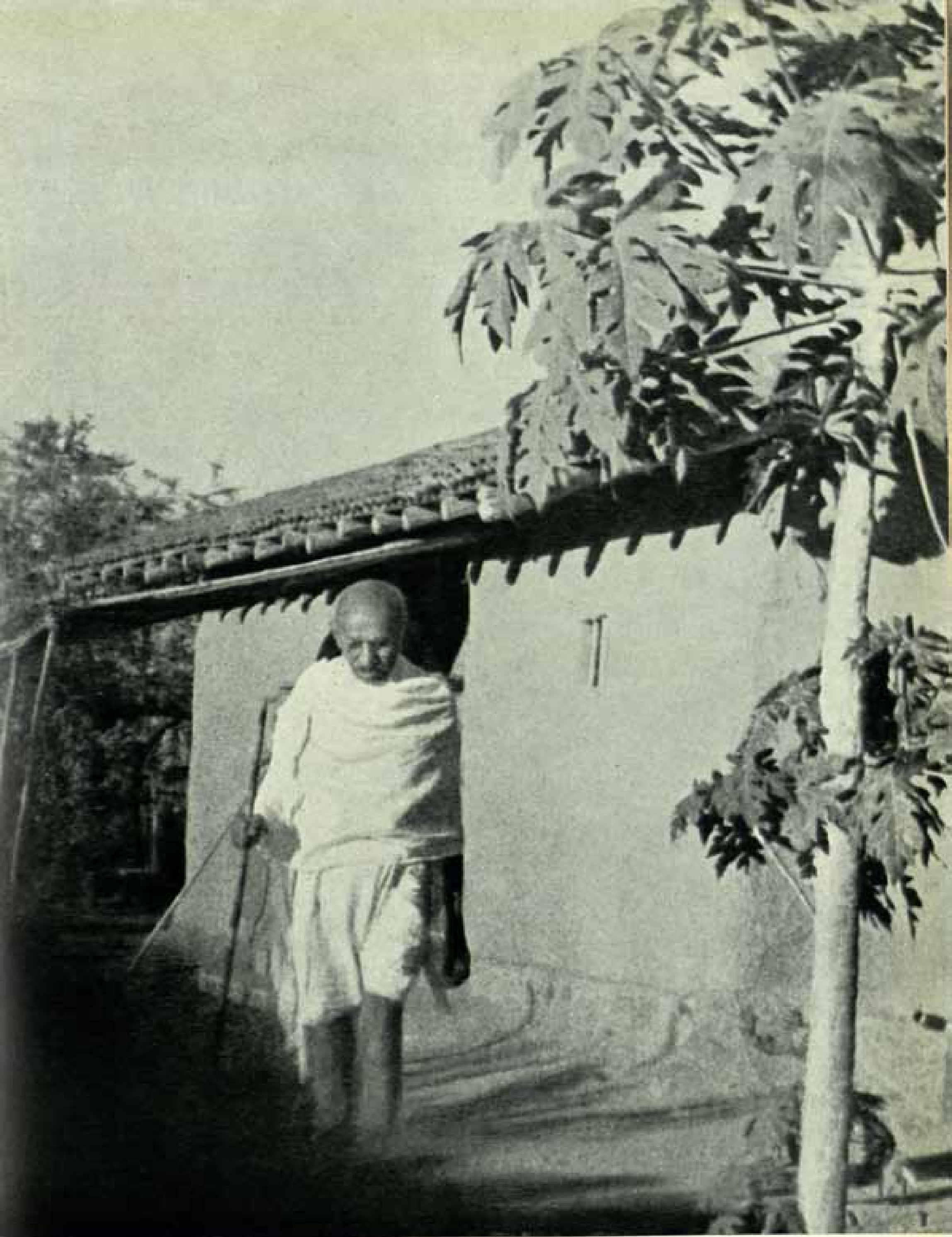
My dear Kamath,

Have just seen
the printed correspondence.
I see Rajkumari
said 'daily' in
stead of 'regularly'.
It was purely a
slip for which
please accept
my apology. R.K.
is just now not
here or she would have
apologised.

Segaon Wardha Yours sincerely
30 1 40 M K Gandhi

Courtesy : H. V. Kamath

Gandhi's letters to H. V. Kamath, dated Segaon, January 1940



Photograph : Kanu Gandhi

In front of his hut at Segaon, January 1939

Courtesy : Manubehn Gandhi

Gandhi's letter to Kasturbai, dated January 10, 1940

object of man's lust. And she will occupy her proud position by the side of man as his mother, maker and silent leader. It is given to her to teach the art of peace to the warring world thirsting for that nectar. She can become the leader in satyagraha which does not require the learning that the books give but does require the stout heart that comes from suffering and faith . . . There is as much reason for man to wish that he was born a woman, as for woman to do otherwise. But the wish is fruitless. Let us be happy in the state to which we are born and do the duty for which nature has destined us."

On the eve of Independence Day—January 26—Gandhi issued the following instructions:

"1. Let it be remembered that, if civil resistance is to be declared, it will have to be more civil and more non-violent than ever before, if only to show the warring nations of the earth that a big people like that of India can fight non-violently for regaining their freedom. Therefore, I shall resolutely refuse to fight, unless I have sufficient confidence that Congressmen will render implicit obedience.

"2. There is as much valour in self-denial as there is in rushing into the furnace, provided that the motive is the same in either of the cases.

"3. Independence Day is an annual feature in the Congress programme and is unconnected with civil resistance. Hence the forthcoming celebration must not be mistaken for the declaration of civil resistance. Nevertheless, it would serve as an index of the discipline among Congressmen and those millions who have hitherto answered the Congress call. There should, on the one hand, be the largest demonstration of all the previous ones we have had, and on the other, it should be of a character so peaceful as to disarm all criticism and induce and enable women with babes, little children and aged people to join the demonstration. Such was the demonstration on 6th April 1919 in Bombay.

"4. Students have asked me what they should do. I would expect them individually to take the pledge, for it means their determination to win independence for India through truthful non-violent means symbolized in the constructive programme, in which the charkha is the central activity. The other items are harmony among the different communities and eradication of untouchability. These do not constitute the struggle, but their fulfilment is indispensable

for it. If the struggle comes, the students will not strike. They will leave their schools or colleges for good. But the students will not strike on the 26th of January. It will be good if the authorities themselves, as they well might, close their institutions and lead the staff and students in processions and other items of the programme. The same thing applies to labour. Those who without leave absent themselves from their work will, in my opinion, be guilty of indiscipline and render themselves unfit for enlisting as soldiers in the satyagraha army. Non-violence is all discipline, wholly voluntary. It is clear from the foregoing that those who do not believe in and use khadi cannot take the pledge.

"5. The pledge is not designed, as some fear, to eliminate strikes and no-tax campaigns. But I must at once confess that I have in my mind neither strikes nor no-tax campaigns as parts of the forthcoming struggle, if it comes at all. In my opinion, the present atmosphere is not conducive to non-violent strikes and non-violent no-tax campaigns on an extensive scale.

"6. I expect the whole weight of the Congress organization to be devoted to popularizing khadi and clearing the existing stocks.

"7. For me, satyagraha is a method of self-purification. The word was first used in the A.-I.C.C. resolution of 1921. The constructive programme has been designed for that purpose. Though that word has fallen into disrepute, I as the author of the programme must have the courage to repeat it. We began satyagraha with a twenty-four hours' fast in 1919. I propose to observe one myself on the 26th, beginning in the evening of the 25th. And those who believe in its efficacy will do likewise.

"8. Though I am preparing myself in the best manner I know and inviting the country to join me for a struggle for the overthrow of the imperialistic spirit and all it means, I am making a desperate effort to avoid the struggle. I believe that the best mind of England, nay, of the world, is sick of the exploitation by the strong of the less strong. I believe in the sincerity of Lord Linlithgow. In the immediate carrying out of policies, it is the individuals who count. I have worked with faith and hope. And I have not lost the hope that we shall have an honourable settlement without any struggle which, no matter how non-violent, must involve considerable suffering. I, therefore, invite all communities and all parties, including Englishmen, to join the effort."

Independence Day was observed with solemnity. The socialists ultimately waived their objection to the constructive programme. But some members of the Forward Bloc persisted in their opposition. In Calcutta, the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee organized a meeting in which the part dealing with the charkha in the pledge was eliminated.

Gandhi's work increased. "I have to harden my heart," he said, "if I am to cope with the responsibility I am carrying." He opened a "Question Box" in *Harijan* and dealt with the queries. "Is not Subhas Babu right when he ascribes to the Congress High Command, including you, the reformist and the liberal tendency?" was one of the first questions. "Of course, he is right," said Gandhi. "Dadabhai was a great reformist. Gokhale was a great liberal; and so was Pherozeshah Mehta. So too was Surendranath Banerjea. They were in their days the nation's tribunes. We are their heirs. We would not have been, if they had not been. What Subhas Babu in his impatience to go forward forgets is that it is possible for men like me to compete with him in the love of the land, in spite of our having reformist and liberal tendencies. But I have told him he has youth before him and he must have the dash of youth. He is not held down by me or anybody else. He is not the man to be so held. It is his own prudence that holds him. And in that way, he is as much reformist and liberal as I am. Only I with my age know it, and he in his youth is blind to the good that is in him. Let my correspondents rest assured that, in spite of our different outlooks and in spite of the Congress ban on him, when he leads in non-violent battle, they will find me following him, as I shall find him following me, if I overtake him. But I must live in the hope that we shall gain our common end without another fight."

In response to an invitation from Lord Linlithgow, Gandhi had an interview with him in Delhi on February 5. The following joint communique was issued:

"A prolonged and very friendly discussion took place in which the whole position was exhaustively examined. Mr. Gandhi made it clear at the outset of the conversation that he had no mandate from the Working Committee, that he was not empowered to commit it in any way, and that he could speak on behalf of himself only.

"His Excellency the Viceroy set out in some detail the intentions and the proposals of His Majesty's Government. He emphasized in

the first place their earnest desire that India should attain dominion status at the earliest possible moment, and to facilitate the achievement of that status by all means in their power. He drew attention to the complexity and difficulty of certain of the issues that called for disposal in that connection, in particular the issue of defence in a dominion position. He made it clear that His Majesty's Government were only too ready to examine the whole of the field in consultation with the representatives of all the parties and interests in India, when the time came. He made clear also the anxiety of His Majesty's Government to shorten the transitional period and bridge it as effectively as possible. His Excellency drew attention to the fact that, as he recently repeated at Baroda, the federal scheme of the act, while at present in suspense, afforded the swiftest stepping-stone to dominion status, and that its adoption, with the consent of all concerned, would facilitate the solution of many of the problems that had to be faced in that connection. He further added that the offer put forward by him in November last of an expansion of the Governor-General's Executive Council on the lines and on the basis then indicated remained open and that His Majesty's Government were prepared to give immediate effect to that offer, subject to the consent of the parties affected. His Majesty's Government would be prepared also to re-open the federal scheme, so as to expedite the achievement of dominion status and to facilitate the settlement after the war of the issues to which it gave rise.

"Mr. Gandhi expressed appreciation of the spirit in which these proposals were put forward, but made it clear that they did not, in his view, at this stage meet the full demand of the Congress party. He suggested, and the Viceroy agreed, that in the circumstances it would be preferable to defer for the present further discussions with the object of a solution of the difficulties which had arisen."

On the morning of February 6, Gandhi received representatives of *Manchester Guardian, News Chronicle, The Times,* and the Associated Press of America. He dictated to them a long statement, pausing only once to correct a word or a sentence. "The vital difference," Gandhi pointed out, "between the Congress demand and the Viceregal offer consists in the fact that the Viceroy's offer contemplates the final determination of India's destiny by the British Government, whereas the Congress contemplated just the contrary. The Congress position is that the test of real freedom consists in the

people of India determining their own destiny without any outside influence, and I see no prospect whatsoever of a peaceful and an honourable settlement between England and India, unless the vital difference is obliterated and England decides upon the right course, that is, accepts the position that the time has come when India must be allowed to determine her own constitution and her status. When that is done, the question of defence, the question of the minorities, the question of the princes and the question of the European interests will automatically resolve itself.

"Let me make this a little clearer. The provision of safeguards for the rights of the minorities is not only common cause between the British Government and the Congress, but the representative assembly of Indians cannot evolve a stable constitution without the fullest satisfaction being given to the legitimate minorities. I use the word 'legitimate' advisedly, because I see that the minorities crop up like mushrooms, till there will be no majority left. By the fullest satisfaction I mean satisfaction which will not militate against the progress of the nation as a whole. I will, therefore, in the event of differences, refer the question to the highest and the most impartial tribunal that can be conceived by human ingenuity. Its voice shall be final, as to what will amount to the fullest satisfaction of the minority interests.

"So far as defence is concerned, certainly it will be the primary concern of free India to make her own arrangements. It may well be that India would want an elaborate preparation and would want Britain's help, if it is given, in enabling her to do so. Thanks to imperial policy, unarmed India is left wholly unprotected except by the British bayonet and Indian soldiers whom the British power has brought into being. It is a position humiliating alike for Britain and for India. I am personally unconcerned because, if I could carry India with me, I would want nothing beyond a police force for protection against dacoits and the like. But so far as defence is concerned, unarmed peaceful India would rely upon the goodwill of the whole world. But I know that that is only a dream at the present moment.

"So far as the European interests are concerned, emphasis on the word 'European' must be entirely removed. But that does not mean that a free India should be free to confiscate the European interests or any other interests. There would, as there should, be provision

for reasonable compensation for any existing interests, which are legitimate and not harmful to the nation. It follows that there can be no question of favouritism which is being enjoyed today by the European interests. I would, therefore, regard them as big zamindars or capitalists. They will be put on the same footing as these.

"And so far as the princes are concerned, they are free to join the national assembly which will determine India's fate not as individuals, but as duly elected representatives of their own people. The princes being vassals of the crown, I fancy that they have no status apart from the crown, and certainly not superior to the crown itself. And if the crown parts with the power it enjoys over the whole of India, naturally the princes have—and it should be their pride—to look up to the successor of the crown, the people of India, for the preservation of their status.

"I hope this will not be regarded as a tall claim, for it is made not on behalf of the Congress, nor of a single party, but on behalf of the unrepresented dumb millions of India. No claim made on their behalf can be considered too tall. I am myself an insignificant being, but I am supposed to have some hold over the dumb millions. I know that in every fibre of my being, I am also one of them; and without them I am nothing and I do not want even to exist.

"I want on their behalf an honourable settlement with Britain, without even a non-violent fight. My dictionary has no such expression as a violent fight. Yesterday I put this view before His Excellency the Viceroy in as courteous and friendly a language as I was capable of using. We approached the discussion as personal friends, each believing in the other's sincerity. We understood each other, and we both recognized that there still existed a wide gulf between the Government's position and the position taken by the Congress which I put, though not as an accredited representative of the Congress, but certainly as the self-appointed representative of the dumb millions.

"We parted as friends. I have no disappointment in me that the negotiations have failed. That failure I am going to use, as I am sure His Excellency the Viceroy is going to use, as a stepping-stone to success. If that success does not come in the near future, I can only say Heaven help India and Britain and the world. The present war must not be decided by a clash of arms, but it must be decided by the moral strength that each party can show. If Britain cannot

recognize India's legitimate claim, what will it mean but Britain's moral bankruptcy?"

Asked regarding the meaning of the words "at this stage", in the sentence "they did not in his view, at this stage, meet the Congress demand," Gandhi replied: "The phrase in the Government communique 'at this stage' is a superfluous phrase. If it is interpreted to mean that the Congress may in future modify its demand, it is absolutely unwarranted!"

Asked if there was any chance of the Congress ministries going back, Gandhi said: "The ministries will remain out, until the main question is settled. I don't see any chance at present of approach between the Congress and the Muslim League. I do not see any, because the Muslim League represented by Jinnah Saheb's letter to me takes up a position which is wholly inimical to the national cause. He contemplates several Indias. The Congress contemplates only one India."

On the way back to Wardha, Gandhi wrote an editorial on the "Task Before Us":

"There need be no disappointment among Congressmen for the failure of the negotiations between H. E. the Viceroy and me. We had met to explore the possibilities of a settlement. I had seen the germs of it in the Viceregal pronouncement in Bombay. But I discovered that I was mistaken. The Viceroy's hands were tied down. He was not to go beyond the four corners of the offer now before the country. Perhaps, it represented too his own opinion.

"But nothing has been lost by our meeting. In spite of the failure we have come nearer each other. And there is a clarification of the situation. Non-violence requires great patience. The failure is only apparent. There can be no failure, since both the cause and the means are just. This meeting has brought us nearer to our goal. If the Viceroy was clear in his enunciation of the British policy, I was not less clear in enunciating that of the Congress. The negotiations, so far as I know, have not been closed. Meanwhile, we have to educate the world, as to what we stand for. India cannot be one of the many dominions, partner in the exploitation of the non-European races of the earth. If hers is a non-violent fight, she must keep her hands clean. If India is not to be co-sharer in the exploitation of the Africans and the degradation of our own countrymen in the dominions, she must have her own independent status. Its

content and nature must be determined by ourselves, meaning the elected representatives of the nation, call such an assembly what you will. Unless the British statesmen definitely concede this, they do not mean to part with power. Neither the question of defence nor that of the minorities nor of the princes nor of the European interests need come in the way of her making this clear declaration. Not that the important matters just mentioned do not require any serious consideration and adjustment. But they will yield to just and proper treatment only when the required declaration is made and followed up immediately by corresponding action in so far as it is possible. Without it, Britain's war with Germany cannot be claimed to be just, certainly not unselfish.

"What is to be done then? Declaration of civil resistance? Not yet. I mean what I say when I ascribe sincerity to Lord Linlithgow. He is doing his best to understand us, and his duty to his superiors and his nation. With all his traditions, he cannot be made to jump to our position. He cannot be hustled into it. And we must not despise our opponent or belittle his strength. It would be wrong to assume weakness in him and seek to take advantage of it. His weakness will not make us strong or fit. And his strength need not baffle us if we are strong. Our duty is, therefore, to make him feel our strength. This we shall do not by civil resistance, but by putting our own house in order. Whilst we may not allow the British Government to plead the minorities and the like as a bar to right action on their part, we may not blind ourselves to the fact that these questions exist and demand solution at our hands. We may dismiss from our minds the impossible and the utterly anti-national stand taken by Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah. But we cannot dismiss the Muslims from our consideration. The same may be said about the other problems. We must educate public mind on these, clear our own minds and know where we stand in relation to them. Maulana Saheb tells me that the Congressmen and the Congress committees are not always considerate in regulating elections to popular bodies and that the local boards are not always dealing justly by all the communities. We have to be above suspicion. Congress committees have to take infinite pains to examine every single complaint. And none may be dismissed as too trivial for consideration. I have many letters and telegrams bitterly complaining that at some elections for the Congress committees, local boards and the like, Muslim, Harijan

or Christian claims have been neglected. Wherever this happens a golden opportunity of doing justice is missed. We may not resort to civil resistance out of our impatience or to cover our shortcomings. It is not a panacea for all our ills, internal and external. It is a specific and sovereign remedy for extraordinary situations. But let us be ready for it. I say with a full sense of my responsibility that we are not ready. It is true that, even if we were ready, the time for it is not ripe. It may be any day. Let us not be found wanting when it comes."

In reply to a request from *Daily Herald,* Gandhi cabled:

"My interview with the Viceroy shows what wide gulf exists between British Government and nationalist India. What is offered is not real independence. Reality demands that India should determine what she needs, not Britain. There could be no justice or virtue in Britain yielding to successful rebellion, violent or non-violent. Will present problems be then deemed to be dissolved? It is necessary for Britain to be just to declare her determination to recognize immediately the freedom of India in practice, and the constitution to be framed by the constituent assembly or an equivalent, as soon as practicable. There is no analogy between the dominions and India. Hers is a case by itself and has to be treated as such. It should be clearly understood that every problem is of Britain's own making. What has happened was no doubt a necessity of imperialism. But if imperialism dies, the problems of Britain's making will be automatically dissolved. Defence is the greatest of all. Why did Britain disarm India? Why have even Indian soldiers become foreigners in their own land? Why did Britain create the princes and arm them with unheard-of powers? Surely for making her foothold secure. Who created the gigantic European interests and why? Who created the minorities? There is no majority save the political majority. But these four were and still are the bulwarks of imperialism. No jugglery of words can hide this naked truth. Britain's moral victory will be assured, when she decides by a mighty effort to abandon her immoral hold on India; and then her other victory will follow, as day follows night. For then, the conscience of the whole world will be on her side. No makeshift, such as is now offered, can stir India's heart or world conscience."

After Gandhi, Jinnah had an interview with the Viceroy. He urged on Lord Linlithgow the great importance attached by the

Muslim and other minorities to the safeguarding of their position in any settlement or discussions that might take place. The Viceroy assured Jinnah that His Majesty's Government were fully alive to the necessity of safeguarding the legitimate interests of minorities and that he need be under "no apprehension that the importance of those subjects would be lost sight of."

A critic warned Gandhi: "The same old game is played again, the background is the same, the actors are the same, and the results must be the same. There were, however, some unfortunate indirect results also. An atmosphere of approaching compromise pervades the country when in effect, there is no ground for it."

"The warning is sound," observed Gandhi. "Perhaps, I did not need it. But such warnings are never superfluous. It is unwise to be too sure of one's own wisdom. It is healthy to be reminded that the strongest might weaken and the wisest might err. And then, so far as I am concerned, I am so ignorant even of the current events that I feel thankful when co-workers keep me posted with things I ought to know.

"But whilst I value the warning given and admit the force of the argument advanced, I do not repent of my having had the prolonged talk. It has given me added strength. It is of great value to an army that its general gains added strength. I should, therefore, repeat the performance every time the Viceroy summons me, that is, so long as I have faith in his sincerity. And every time I shall come out with greater strength than I go with. The method of satyagraha requires that the satyagrahi should never lose hope, so long as there is the slightest ground left for it. For, the satyagrahi never despairs of being able to evoke the best in his opponent, his mission being to convert the opponent, not humiliate or defeat him. He, therefore, even knocks at his opponent's door, if that becomes necessary, as I did often with General Smuts. It so happened that the last opening, when even I had the least hope, proved the prelude to success.

"There ought not to be demoralization among the ranks. It is up to the lieutenants to be in constant touch with them and explain to them the reason for, and the bearing on the struggle of, each step. For whether there is actual battle or merely preparation, the education of the masses continues without interruption. It is a great mistake to suppose that the revolutionary instinct will die, if the

garnered energies of the people have no outlet. This may be true of violent revolution, but it is utterly wrong of non-violent revolution. I am quite convinced that we would put ourselves in the wrong if in our impatience we precipitate the battle or, which is the same thing, bang the door on negotiations. The battle will come at the right time, when it is clear beyond doubt that there is no escape from it. Misunderstanding created in Britain or the world outside need not perturb us much, for being foundationless, it is sure to disappear in the face of our truth.

"Nor need the prospect worry us of the negotiations proving insincere in the sense of their being used as a screen to cover Britain's plans to consolidate her strength by misleading world opinion and creating and strengthening divisions among us. What does matter is our own weakness, for which we alone should be to blame."

Lord Zetland, in an interview to a British journal, made an appeal to the Congress leaders to "escape from the tyranny of phrases". The Secretary of State for India declared that the experience of the working of the constitution in the act of 1935 had made it clear that the problem of minorities must be taken in hand by Indians themselves. "Long-range bombardments by the leading personalities from the platform and the press are little likely to lead anywhere. What is wanted is escape from the tyranny of phrases and a descent from idealism, from the abstract to the concrete."

In reply to Lord Zetland's utterances, Gandhi issued the following statement on February 14:

"Lord Zetland's recent pronouncement sets at rest all speculation regarding the Government's attitude towards the nationalist demand. I have been taught to believe that dominion status after the statute of Westminster pattern is akin to independence and includes the right to secede. Therefore, I had thought there would be no difficulty about Britain allowing India to determine her own status. But Lord Zetland makes it clear that Britain, not India, has to determine it. In other words, the British hold on India must remain. He puts the burden upon the nationalists of solving the minorities question and the like. I have shown how impossible this is without previous recognition of India's independence, no doubt subject to the safeguards. His Lordship thinks that, because some Indians have received the boon of the English education and have learnt ideas of freedom from British writers, they will want always

to be under the British tutelage, euphemistically called partnership. This is what I call banging the door upon the nationalist position. Does it mean a pact deadlier than was announced at the last Round Table Conference? If it does, it is a declaration of war against the nationalists who are out to destroy the empire spirit. I submit that it is wrong to dismiss the Indian claim by accusing the nationalists of losing realities in idealism. I suggest that it is he who refuses to face realities and is wandering in a forest of unrealities. I cannot accuse him of idealism. I assure him that nationalist India is dreadfully in earnest."

"Is it war?" asked Gandhi in an editorial commenting on Lord Zetland's attitude. He wrote:

"The builders of the British Indian Empire have patiently built its four pillars—the European interests, the army, the princes and the communal divisions. The last three were to subserve the first. It is clear to the realist that the builders have to remove the four pillars, before they can claim to have given up the empire or the empire spirit. But they say to the nationalists or the destroyers of the empire spirit, 'You have to deal with all the four pillars yourselves, before we can treat India as an independent nation, instead of being our dependency.' The builders say in other words, 'Guarantee the European interests, make your own army, treat with the princes and with the communalists, otherwise known as minorities.' The destroyers retort: 'You imposed the European interests on us and for their defence you built an army and kept it a close preserve, you saw that you could use the then existing princes for your own purpose, you made them and unmade them and you created new ones, you armed them with powers they could not enjoy before with safety. In fact, you partitioned India, so that it would never rise against you in one mass. You saw again that we were cursed with the caste spirit, you took advantage of our weakness and refined it till at last claims are made which if they were satisfied, there would be no single Indian nation and no independence. Add to all this the fact that by your policy of disarmament you have emasculated a whole nation. But we do not blame you for the past. On the contrary, we admire your bravery, skill and spirit of adventure. You have copied other empire builders who preceded you. You have improved upon them in a variety of ways. But if you profess, as you have professed, that you have decided to

give India her due, then you have to remove from our way the obstacles you have created. You are entitled to ask us to recognize the difficulties in the way of your making delivery and even to help you. If you are honest, you will leave us to do the best. You must trust our sense of justice, not your strong arm, to make us do what is right and proper. Hitherto, you have determined our fate for us. Now if you are earnest, you will not only let us determine the method and manner of governing ourselves, but even help us to do so, if we want your help.'

"Lord Zetland has given the answer to the destroyers, which I paraphrase as follows: 'We mean to hold on to what we have. Within that orbit, we will let you have such freedom as we think is good for you. This war that we are fighting is to prevent the disruption of our empire. We want your help, if you will give it on these terms. It is good for you and us. But we will do without your help, if you will not give it. You are not the only party we have to deal with. There are many in India who recognize the benefits of the British rule and Pax Britannica. We propose to win the war with the help we can command from India through loyal agencies. Their services we shall recognize by the grant of further reforms when the time comes. This is what we mean when we say we shall make the world safe for democracy. We are the most democratic power in the world. Therefore, if we are safe, so are those who are with us. And those like India, who are under our tutelage, will be initiated into the art of democracy in gradual stages, so that their progress might be uninterrupted and they might not have to go through the travail we had to go through.' I hope the paraphrase does no injustice to Lord Zetland. If it is fairly correct, the issues are quite clear. Between the two—the nationalist and imperialist—there is no meeting ground. If, therefore, Lord Zetland represents the British Government's considered view, it is a declaration of war against nationalist India. For all the four pillars stand firm, rock-like. The more the nationalists try to deal with them as if they were problems for which they were responsible, the firmer they must become. I cannot conscientiously pray for the success of British arms if it means a further lease of life to India's subjection to foreign domination. I write this last sentence with a heavy heart."

Jinnah bitterly criticized Gandhi. "If Gandhi wants to be logical," he remarked, "he should ask for the immediate withdrawal of that

'humiliating the British bayonet' so that the people of India could settle their own manner of self-determination in complete independence. That he does not do, because he is well aware of what would result, if the Congress caucus tried to impose its present ideas in those circumstances."

There was a similar criticism from other quarters also to which Gandhi replied:

"There can be no manly peace in the land, unless the British bayonet is withdrawn. The risk of riots has to be run. Non-violence will be born out of such risks, if at all it is to be part of national life. It is daily becoming crystal-clear that real unity will not come so long as the British bayonet crushes the free spirit of the people. The peace it imposes is the peace of the grave. I feel that riots will be a welcome relief, if that is the price we have to pay for freedom. For, out of them, I can conceive the possibility of peace coming, not out of the present unreality. The way out of riots on the one hand, and British bayonets on the other, is frank acceptance of non-violence. To this my life is dedicated, and my faith in its possibility and efficacy will survive the dissolution of my body."

Dissolution Of Sangh

1940

On his way to the annual conference of the Gandhi Seva Sangh, Gandhi spent a couple of days at Santiniketan. On February 18, Rabindranath Tagore held a formal reception in the mango grove. "Homage to the great," said the poet, "naturally seeks its manifestation in the language of simplicity and we offer you these few words to let you know that we accept you as our own, as one belonging to all humanity."

"Santiniketan is not new to me," Gandhi said. "I was first there in 1915, when it was yet taking shape—not that it is not doing so even now. Gurudev is himself growing. Old age has made no difference to the elasticity of his mind. Santiniketan will, therefore, never cease to grow so long as Gurudev's spirit broods over it. He is in everyone and everything in Santiniketan. The veneration in which he is held by everyone is uplifting because it is spontaneous. It certainly uplifted me. I saw that Gurudev was living for his dearest creation Visva-Bharati. He wants it to prosper and to feel sure of its future. He had a long talk about it with me but that was not enough for him, and so as we parted he put into my hands the following precious letter:

"'Dear Mahatmaji—You have just had a bird's-eye view this morning of our Visva-Bharati centre of activities. I do not know what estimate you have formed of its merit. You know that though this institution is national in its immediate aspect it is international in its spirit, offering according to the best of its means India's hospitality of culture to the rest of the world. At one of its critical moments, you have saved it from an utter breakdown and helped it to its legs. We are ever thankful to you for this act of friendliness. And, now, before you take your leave of Santiniketan, I make my fervent appeal to you. Accept this institution under your protection, giving it an assurance of permanence if you consider it to be

a national asset. Visva-Bharati is like a vessel which is carrying the cargo of my life's best treasure, and I hope it may claim special care from my countrymen for its preservation.'

"Who am I to take this institution under my protection? It carries God's protection, because it is the creation of an earnest soul. It is not a show thing. Gurudev himself is international because he is truly national. Therefore, all his creation is international, and Visva-Bharati is the best of all. I have no doubt whatsoever that Gurudev deserves to be relieved of all anxiety about its future so far as the financial part is concerned. In my reply to his touching appeal I have promised all the assistance I am capable of rendering. This note is the beginning of the effort."

On February 20, 1940, the seven-day session of the Gandhi Seva Sangh commenced at Malikanda, a village on the bank of Padma in East Bengal. On the way and during the hours of the sangh session too, anti-Gandhi slogans were shouted by hostile demonstrators. "Don't want Gandhi", "Down with Gandhism", "Don't want *ad hoc* Committee". This was the result of disciplinary action against Subhas Bose and the suspension of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee.

Gandhi took no personal offence at these hostile demonstrations. "All incompatible mixtures," he said addressing the workers, "are bound to explode. You must resolve to act on the square and whilst you should be prepared to compromise on the non-essentials you should never be in the uncomfortable position of having to compromise truth. You should retire from all such positions. That is the essence of compromise. Let service, without near or distant objective, be your motto. You are surrounded by poverty on all sides. Serve those that are afflicted, whether they are Muslims or Namashudras or others. Satyagraha transcends parties, and divisions of class and creed. It should permeate the whole of our being and society. There is no question before you of enlisting members for the Congress. Give up all thought of gaining members for the sake of swelling your register. That is power politics. I would rather have no register, than blacken it with bogus members. If you all thus become the silent members, even one of you will not now say, 'What will happen if the Congress is captured by the opponents?' You know the precept of the Upanishad, 'Enjoy by means of renunciation'. Give up the Congress, in order to 'enjoy' or have it. The

moment I set my heart on some kind of capturing, I am done for. No manoeuvring to keep your hold on the Congress, no descending from the right path, and you will disarm all opposition. A bogus Congress register can never lead you to swaraj any more than a paper boat can help you to sail across the Padma."

Later he addressed a larger meeting of the workers. The slogan, "Down with Gandhism", persisted. "Let us understand," he said, "that there is a kind of poison in the atmosphere. How are we to fight it?

"Whether the number of those who shout these slogans is fifty or five hundred, we may not ignore them. We must try to discover their grievance. We may not treat them with contempt, if we are believers in ahimsa. No *argumentum ad hominum* will do. It is no answer to say that they are mercenaries, for you may be sure that not any and every one who is offered a train fare and wage would consent to come here. They must, to an extent, believe in their mission. And at the back of their mind is the feeling that 'Gandhism' is out to destroy what they hold dear. If that is the case, they may well desire the destruction of Gandhism. When we see the thing in this light, we can afford to keep our temper. We will then try to meet and plead with them and assure them that we do not desire to obstruct their work. I do not say that you will immediately win them over, but you will certainly check the spread of the poison. Retaliation is counter poison, and poison breeds more poisons. The nectar of love alone can destroy the poison of hate.

"Therefore, let not the cries anger you. Let none of you think of drowning those cries in the cry of 'Mahatma Gandhi-ki-jai'. You have done well in not shouting counter slogans. You have thereby sterilized theirs, and very little mischief has been done. If forbearance is based on ahimsa, I am sure they will ultimately be still.

"It is a delusion to think that it is necessary to be members of the Congress in order to serve it. There are numerous people outside the Congress who are serving it better than those who are in it. I, therefore, have told you that he who takes up the charkha with a knowledge of its implications serves the Congress cause better than Congressmen. I was glad to be told that all of you have pledged yourselves to spin at least 60,000 yards a year. If, however, there is the slightest hesitance on your part, I would ask you not to take the pledge, but try to do your quota without taking it.

"There is, however, a flaw in self-spinning to which I should like to draw your attention. You will, of course, spin to make your own cloth, but you will to that extent deprive the poor spinners. The wheel is meant for them. But though there is this flaw in it I am asking you all to spin in order to universalize spinning. Those of you who are too poor to purchase khadi will, of course, card and spin for yourselves. But such of you as can afford to buy khadi will send the 60,000 yards to the All-India Spinners' Association, which will thus be able to reduce that price of khadi in its stock by adding to it the gift of your yarn. That will enable poor people who can neither spin for themselves nor purchase khadi today, to buy the khadi thus made cheaper for them. This is what I call a voluntary labour tax. In Europe, there is compulsory military service. Let us have compulsory non-military service here. All that you do, you will do intelligently, of your free will, and out of the spirit of service.

"Along with khadi are the other cottage industries, Harijan service and other items of constructive work, which, if solidly done, will create the strength that political work, so called, cannot. That may preclude the necessity for civil disobedience and will automatically end the Hindu-Muslim tension, abolish the squabbles between the leftists and the rightists, and break the chains of slavery. This, to my mind, is *rashtradharma par excellence*."

On February 21, Gandhi addressed the members of the sangh and revealed that he was inclined to wind up the Gandhi Seva Sangh in the present form. "I know" he observed, "that we are going to lose nothing if we wind it up, and if we alter it we have to do so radically. But I am not yet quite definite on the point. I shall explain how we lose nothing by winding up the sangh. The slogan 'Down with Gandhism' is not without meaning. For, if Gandhism means simply mechanically turning the charkha, it deserves to be destroyed. Millions of women used in the past to spin regularly, but they were immersed in slavery. Kautilya implies that the spinning was not voluntary but was forced labour. If that is how the charkha is to go on, Gandhism must be destroyed. If, further, our ahimsa is not of the brave but of the weak, and if it will bend the knee before *himsa*, Gandhism deserves to be destroyed. When ahimsa is a weapon of the weak, it recoils on him who wields it. Unless, therefore, the charkha adds to your ahimsa and makes you

stronger every day, your Gandhism is of little avail. Those who shout the slogans are doing so in anger; but I say in full knowledge of what I say and with all the conviction of experience at my back that, if the charkha is to be turned only mechanically, Gandhism deserves to be destroyed. The turning of the charkha in a lifeless way will be like the turning of the beads of the rosary with a wandering mind turned away from God. One is self-deception, the other is hypocrisy.

"I would, therefore, repeat again that, even if you spin all the twenty-four hours mechanically, it will not do. Or else, we should have enrolled lakhs of our spinners as members of the sangh. But that never crossed my mind. We have to spin intelligently and with a full consciousness of all the implications of spinning. Then it will brighten your intellect, strengthen your mind and heart, and take you more and more towards the goal.

"That brings me to the question whether we are as non-violent as we should be. Are we non-violent in our dealings with those with whom we have to work? I am sure I am not, and recently I have discovered even untruth in my conduct, unconscious though it was. That untruth has sprung out of my desire to please people, to tell the truth in a palatable way. Thus, it was my duty to tell those associates who had expressed their desire to accompany me to Santiniketan, that I could take only those whom I needed for work. But I hesitated. I wrote for permission to take a large party there. The permission came, but I realized that I had been unnecessarily soft, and at last I mustered courage to cut down our party to the minimum. I have the good fortune to have associates who put up with my vacillation in such matters. The charkha must give us the courage to tell the truth. You may not know that I wrote *Hind Swaraj* for my dear friend Dr. Mehta, who is now no more. He was a believer in violence at one time. And all the argument in the book is reproduced almost as it took place with him. He had no opinion of my intellect then, but he was converted to my view by my appeal to the heart. Well, let me tell you that, though I had not then seen the spinning wheel, I ended up the argument with the statement that a non-violent civilization must be based on universal spinning. Jethalal once asked me why I was not devoting all my time to the charkha, having this wonderful faith in the wheel. I should, if God had not also endowed me with

the powers that I can use for the benefit of mankind. Moreover, as I have said just now, the charkha has vast implications which I have been patiently working out.

"Now if our life does not express that ahimsa, had we not better wind up the sangh? There was that assault on four people last evening. I wonder what you thought of the assailants. Were you angry, or had you pity for them? True ahimsa should wear a smile even on death-bed brought about by an assailant. It is only with that ahimsa that we can befriend our opponents and win their love. That ahimsa most of us, including myself, have not. If so, why should we have the sangh and place the heavy burden of conducting it on Kishorlalbhai? Many of you will say that the sangh was a source of comfort and support for you, and that you cannot do without it. I should say that for that very reason, the sangh should be wound up. This dependence on the sangh does not conduce to your strength.

"There is another thing I have to tell you. I advised the sangh in Hudli to interest itself in parliamentary politics. The advice was then proper under the circumstances. We should not have otherwise gained the experience that we have today. But some of us had not the ahimsa necessary to steer our path through rocks and shoals. We had ambition and we fought each other for positions of power and responsibility, and strayed from ahimsa. Let us, therefore, forget politics, until our service is needed and people cannot do without it. We cannot represent the millions, until we have reduced ourselves to a cipher, effaced the self in us completely.

"And why should we bear the burden of the membership of a sangh, without the practice of the principles that is so essential to it? Is not the Congress enough for us? Why then have another organization and belie what is called Gandhism and the organization itself?

"What we have gained, we are not going to lose. The experience will serve us in good stead. We do not give up an iota of the principles we have stood for, but we relieve ourselves of an intolerable burden. When there is so much bitterness and so much poison abroad, we have no other alternative but to work away silently. When I say we must steer clear of politics, I do not say that the Sardar or Rajendra Babu must resign their membership of the Working Committee. I simply say that no member of the sangh should

participate in politics. But under my plan, they won't be members of the sangh. Of course, even to those who are doing political work I would say that they have no business to do it, if they cannot do it in the spirit of non-violence.

"There is always the fear of self-righteousness possessing us, the fear of arrogating to ourselves a superiority that we do not possess. Rather than, therefore, call yourselves the members of the Gandhi Seva Sangh, why not carry truth and ahimsa in every home and be individual representatives of them, wherever you are?"

There was then a discussion on Gandhi's proposition.

Question: "Does it then mean that all politics are taboo? Does it mean that we are unfit to take part in politics? Because, there has been some goondaism, does it mean that we should submit to it? Why should we thus put a premium on goondaism?"

Answer: "I have not suggested that anybody should withdraw from politics. I have simply said that as members of the sangh, we should not hold any executive offices, so that we give rise to no bitterness. The Sardar either retires from the sangh or as member of the Working Committee. Politics as such is no taboo. All constructive activity is in a sense part and parcel of the politics of the country. But here, we are referring to power politics. Ahimsa has nothing to do with power. Mine is a great experiment, and altered situation needs altered tactics. I am a seeker, and I have patiently to work out the science of satyagraha.

"Why should there be eagerness for politics? Have we ever discussed politics, so called, here? Have you asked me what happened between the Viceroy and me? Do you ever ask the Sardar to tell you what he has to do as the chairman of the Parliamentary Sub-Committee? We are a body of seekers. We come here for introspection, for correcting our errors. If our search dictates the way I am suggesting, why shirk it for fear of being misunderstood?

"There is conflagration everywhere. What is our duty? We have to fight *himsa* with ahimsa. But do we need a sangh to fight the goondaism that we are witnessing? It will be sheer folly to do so. Supposing someone calls me names, shall I go to his house and receive more abuse? I wonder, if you knew the statue of the three monkeys in Kobe. It represents three monkeys with closed ears, closed mouth and closed eyes, eloquently teaching the world to hear no evil, to speak no evil and to see no evil. And that is the

secret of non-co-operation. Shall we shout counter slogans at the people outside the gate? Of course, we will not leave this place, if they should come and invade our camp. But why should we go and feed their provocation?

"The Sardar's membership adds to the prestige of the sangh, not to his. He need not depend on the sangh for his political work. He is a born politician. That kind of work is in his bones, whereas constructive work is in mine. Of course, he had taken up constructive work, but that is not his passion. I was born for it; it is part and parcel of myself. I would dance with joy if I had to give up politics; not so perhaps the Sardar. That is the difference between us. For those who derive prestige from the sangh, it is better that they forgo that borrowed glory. It is that way that we give it the colour of a rival organization which it was never intended to be.

"And let no one feel that the sangh is a useless shell to be flung away. I have never said so. What I do say is that it has not found its mission. I have got nothing from it. It furnishes no ground for the exercise of my ahimsa. For, you will bear with me, no matter what I say. But the Congress does give me that exercise. For, I can be opposed and criticized there. That becomes the test of my ahimsa. I can always replenish my battery there. But what can the sangh give me?"

On the third day, Gandhi gave an exhaustive explanation of the change he wanted to bring about and of the task he wanted the sangh to fulfil: "The resolution adopted at Hudli at my instance was, I now see, an error. If we really wanted to enter politics, we should have changed the complexion of the sangh. We have no political books even. I have read little on socialism. Politics, so called, is neither in my line nor in most of you, your president the least. He is a philosopher, moralist and writer.

"Yet by the Hudli resolution we allowed the world to think that we were entering politics and that we had had enough experience. Unconsciously I erred. It is best to own the error. It is sure to add to our strength. We have discovered our shortcomings and have become wiser by our experience. Error ceases to be error, when it is corrected. There is no room for the sangh in power politics. It is such a dangerous game that even individuals may have to get out of it, for their ahimsa will be put to the severest test.

"I told you on the first day the circumstances in which Gandhism deserved to be destroyed. But now, I go still further and say that let Gandhism be destroyed if it stands for error. Truth and ahimsa will never be destroyed, but if Gandhism is another name for sectarianism, it deserves to be destroyed. If I were to know, after my death, that what I stood for had degenerated into sectarianism, I should be deeply pained. We have to work away silently. Let no one say that he is a follower of Gandhi. It is enough that I should be my own follower. I know what an inadequate follower I am of myself, for I cannot live up to the convictions I stand for. You are no followers but fellow students, fellow pilgrims, fellow seekers and fellow workers.

"Once you have realized this, you will see that we must eschew power politics, that is, the holding of responsible positions in the Congress, municipal and local bodies.

"When we have done this, our sangh to be useful should become a post-graduate school or a research organization. For constructive work, there are already other institutions—the Charkha Sangh, the Village Industries Association, the Basic Education Scheme, the Harijan Sevak Sangh, all of which I am directing or guiding. There are the Hindi Prachar and the Ahmedabad labour organizations also, which are under my guidance. Now, if the sangh converted itself into a post-graduate or a research organization for all these bodies, it would fulfil its true function. These organizations cannot carry on this research work. For instance, the Charkha Sangh was created specially to give a partial employment to the half-starved millions who have many idle hours during six months in the year. I cannot expect Shankarlal Banker to find and to explain to his spinners the non-violence aspect of the charkha or its many implications. That will be your function. You have to study all the implications and place the results of your research before the public. Similarly with the other organizations. The sangh's work should commence where theirs ends. Thus, there can be no fear of overlapping or a clash. How can here be a clash where all are ruled by ahimsa? The spinners will spin, but you will try to realize God, as I am trying to do through the charkha. With a view to that, you will perfect yourself in it. You will not rest content with being indifferent spinners. Every break of the thread should be intolerable for you, you will study every little detail of the charkha, as Vinoba

has done. He has reduced the whole thing, or is trying to reduce it, to scientific precision. He had just sent me a piece of cloth woven out of the *takli* yarn spun by a Muslim pupil of his. It is a very fine piece of workmanship.

"Then you will ask yourselves whether the charkha daily takes you nearer to the observance of your eleven vows, whether it is going to add to people's strength or will reduce them to automatons, whether it will make of them non-violent workers and soldiers for a new order, or whether it will reduce them to slavery.

"You must know that even a society organized on the basis of violence is run by experts. We have to be experts for the establishment of a society on the basis of truth and non-violence.

"We have to make truth and non-violence not matters for mere individual practice, but for practice by groups and communities and nations. That, at any rate, is my dream. I shall live and die in trying to realize it. My faith helps me to discover new truths every day. Ahimsa is the attribute of the soul, and, therefore, to be practised by everybody in all the affairs of life. If it cannot be practised in all departments, it has no practical value.

"Are we capable of the task I have chalked out here? It is clear that this difficult but most important work cannot be done by all of you. Under my plan, most of you will cease to be members. The few who remain will address themselves to the task. If you think this too difficult a task, it is best to wind up the sangh. That does not mean that you will not individually work for that great task which will call forth all the faculties of your mind, body and soul and dedicate yourselves to it. Whatever is the case, the sangh as it exists today has to go. It has to re-model itself. Today, it simply drains away the energies of a god-fearing, persevering, able worker like Kishorlalbhai who has simply worn himself out. Let us free him from today and set about our task."

The committee, to which the task was entrusted of winding up or suggesting a vital modification, drafted the following resolution which was finally adopted by the sangh:

"Whereas, past experience has shown that holding of responsible positions by members of the Gandhi Seva Sangh in political organizations is undesirable, this meeting of the sangh resolves that such members of the sangh as are on any elective bodies in such organizations and intend to serve on them should not continue as members



From Samati Morarjee Collection

Gandhi's arrival at Santiniketan, February 17, 1940



Photograph : S. Shaha

Gandhi and Kasturbai being received by the inmates of Santiniketan, February 17, 1940



Photograph : S. Shaha

Tagore with his guests, Gandhi and Kasturbai, in the mud-house Shyamli, February 17, 1940



Photograph : S. Shaha

Welcome to Gandhi, Santiniketan, February 18, 1940

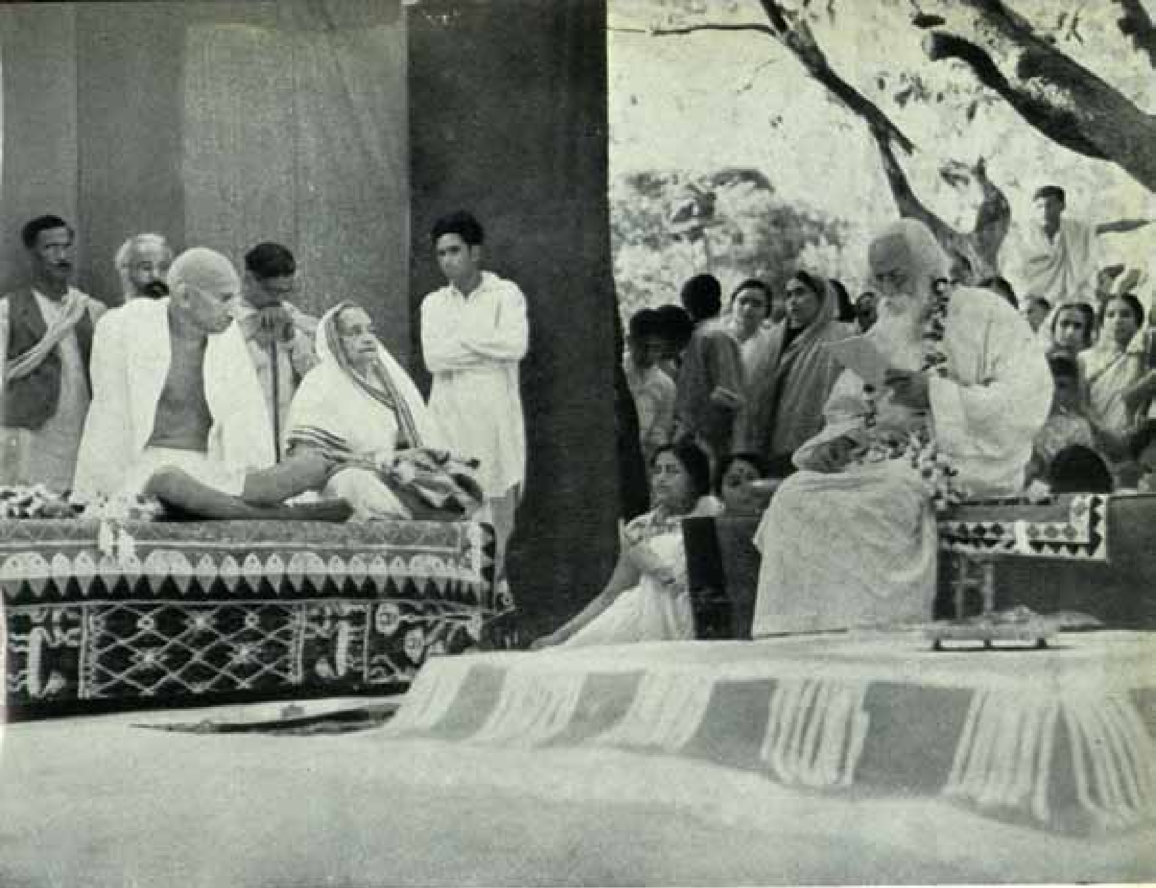


Photograph : S. Shaha

Exchange of greetings, February 18, 1940

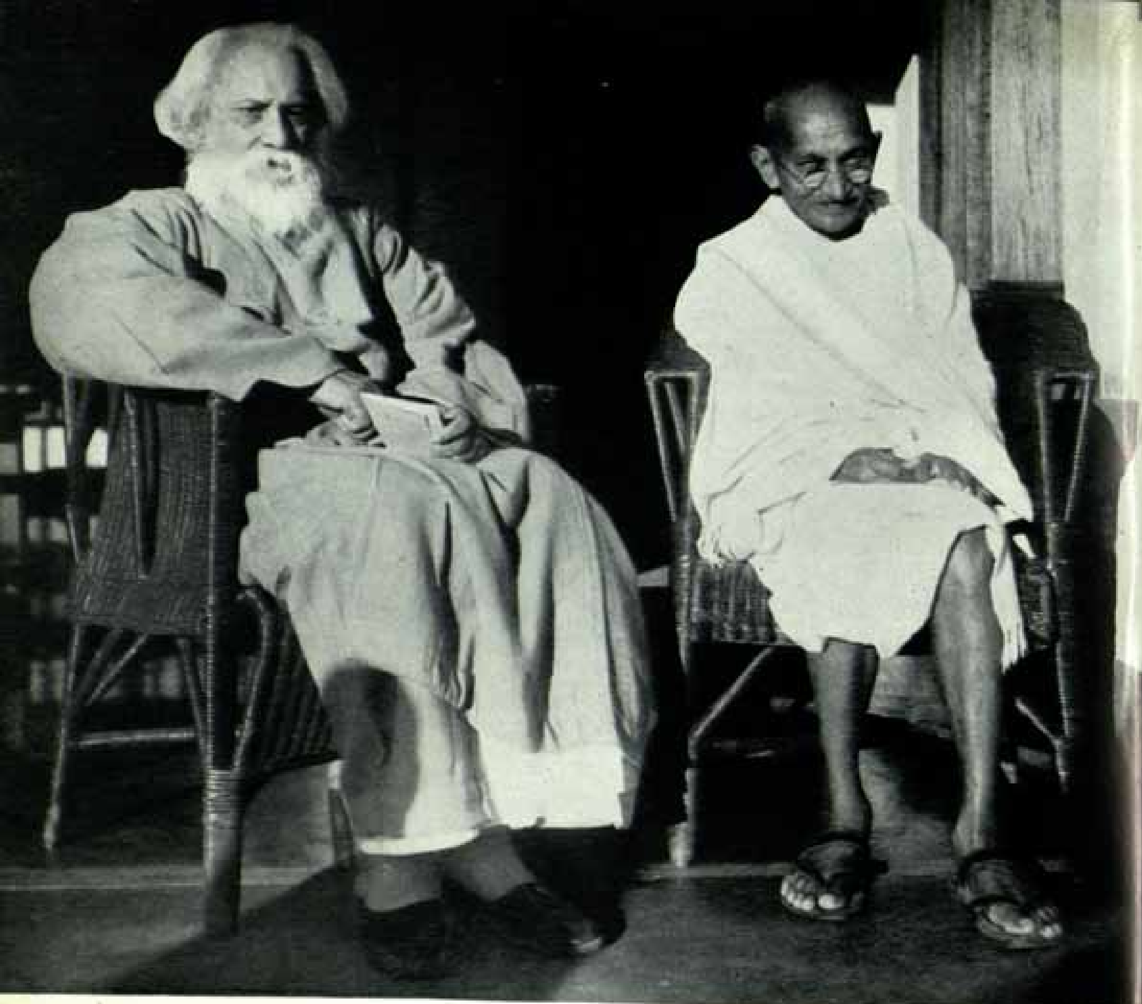
Photograph : S. Shaha

Tagore garlanding Gandhi, February 18, 1940



Photograph : S. Shaha

Tagore delivering the address of welcome to Gandhi and Kasturbai, Amra-Kunj, Santiniketan, February 18, 1940



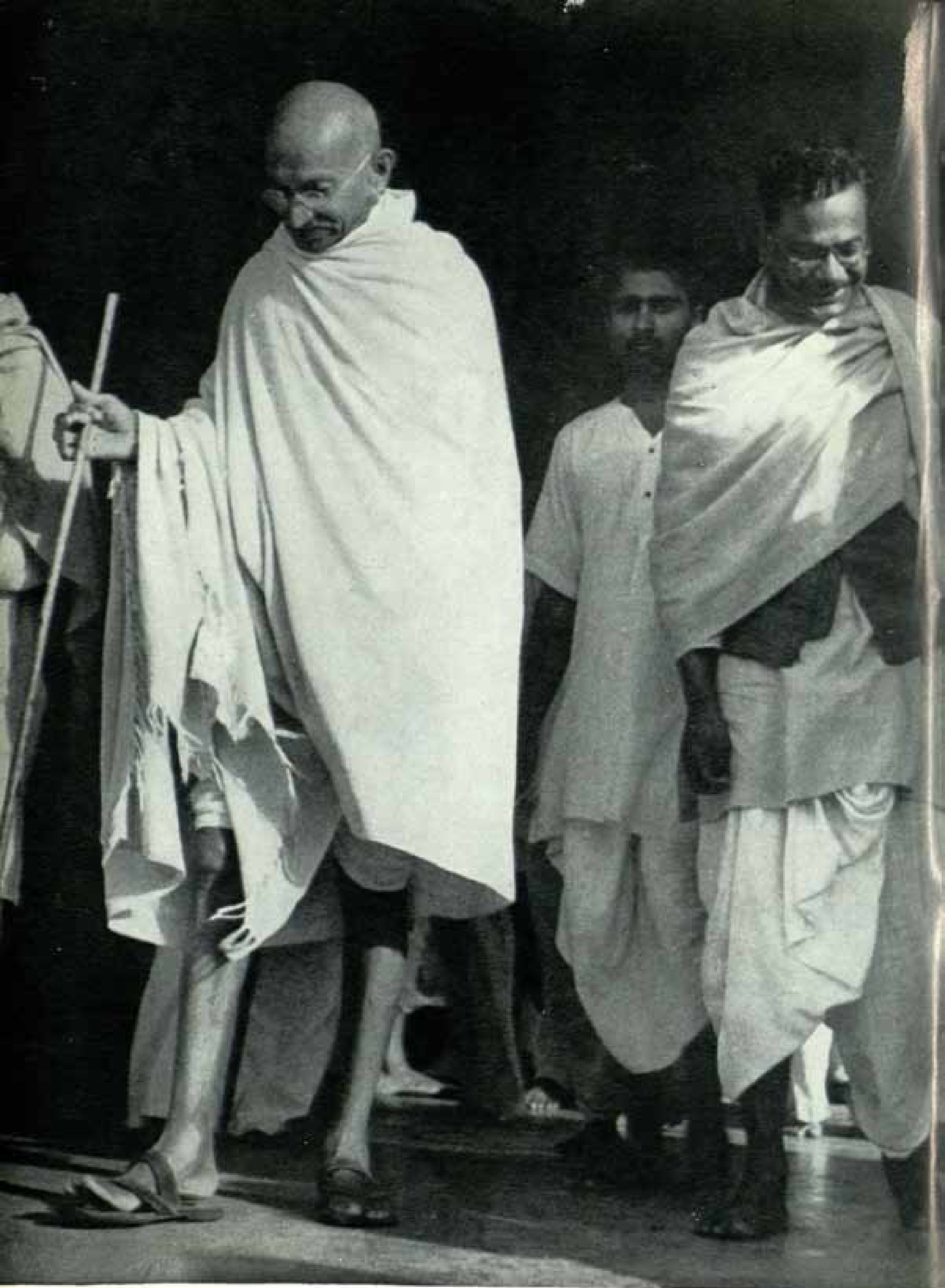
Courtesy : Hindustan Standard

Tagore and Gandhi



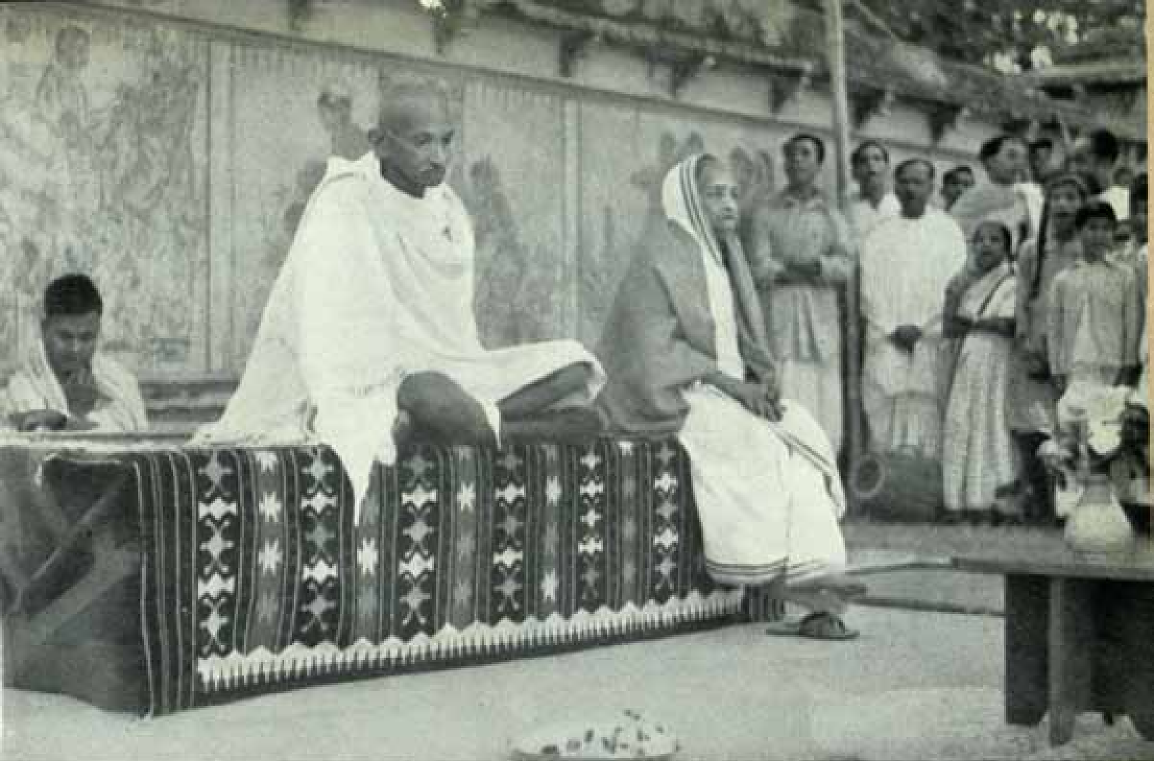
Photograph : S. Shaha

At Vidya-Bhawan with the Principal Kshitimohan Sen, Santiniketan, February 1940



Photograph : S. Shaha

On the way to Kala-Bhawan, with Nandalal Bose, Santiniketan, February 1940



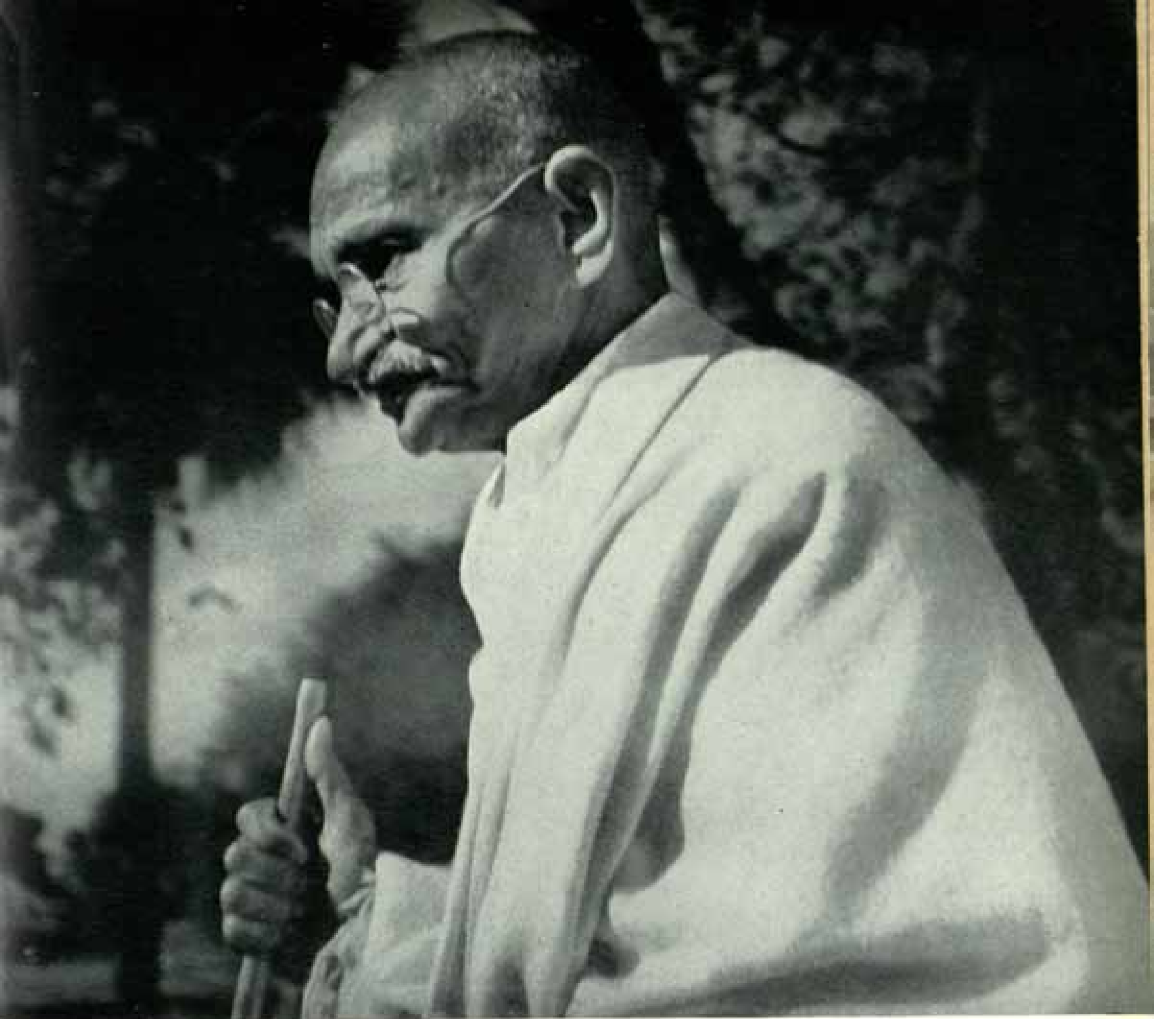
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Reception to Gandhi by the students of Kala-Bhawan

Photograph : S. Shaha

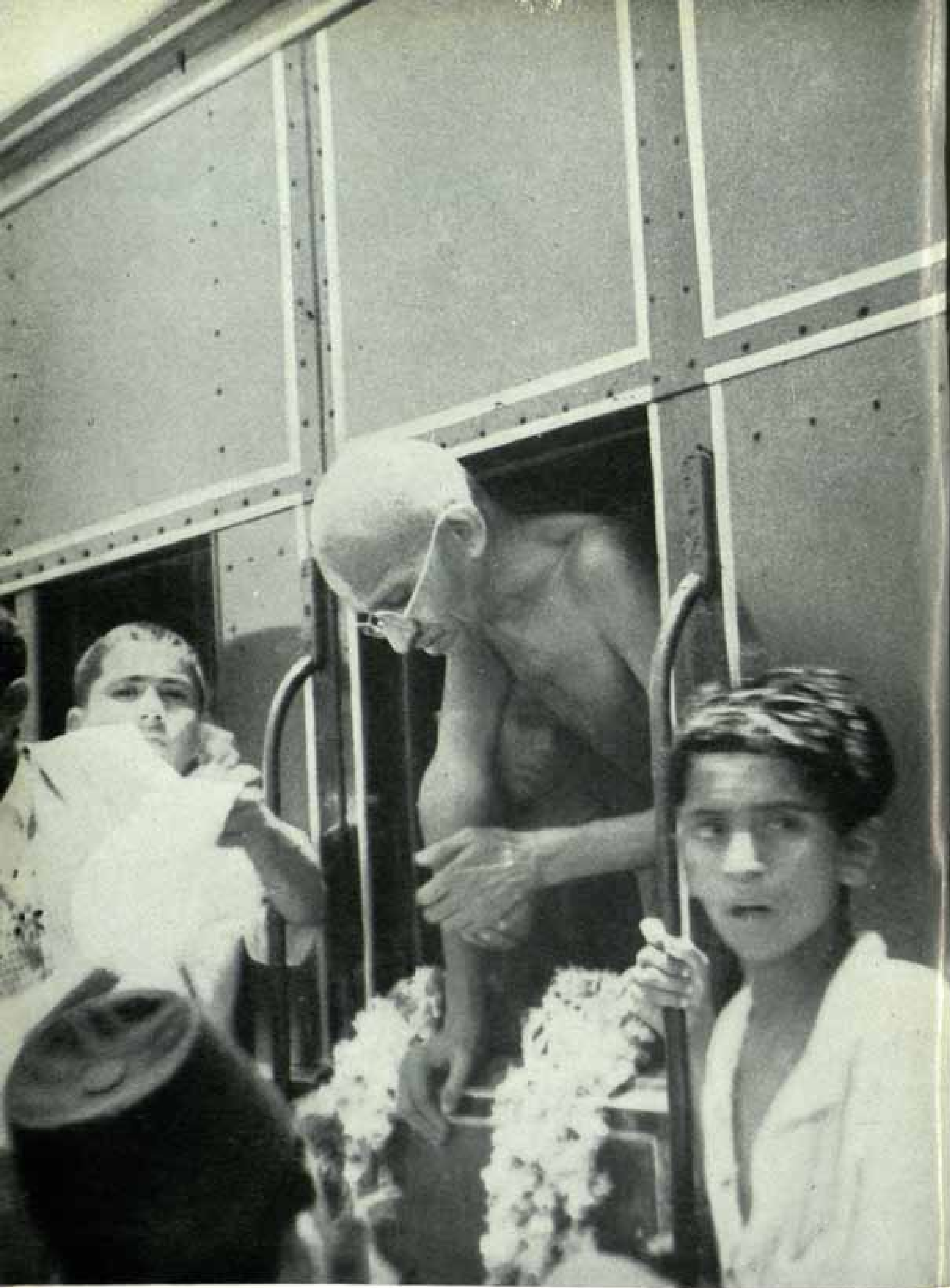
Gandhi addressing the students of Kala-Bhawan

At Sriniketan, rural reconstruction centre of Visva-Bharati, February 1940



Photograph : S. Shaha

Gandhi at Santiniketan, February 1940



From Sumati Morarjee Collection

On the way to Calcutta, February 19, 1940

On the way to
Calcutta
19-2-40

Dear Gurudev,

The touching note that you put into my hands as we parted has gone straight into my heart. Of course Visvabharati is a national institution. It is undoubtedly also international. You may depend upon my doing all I can in the common endeavour to assure its permanence.

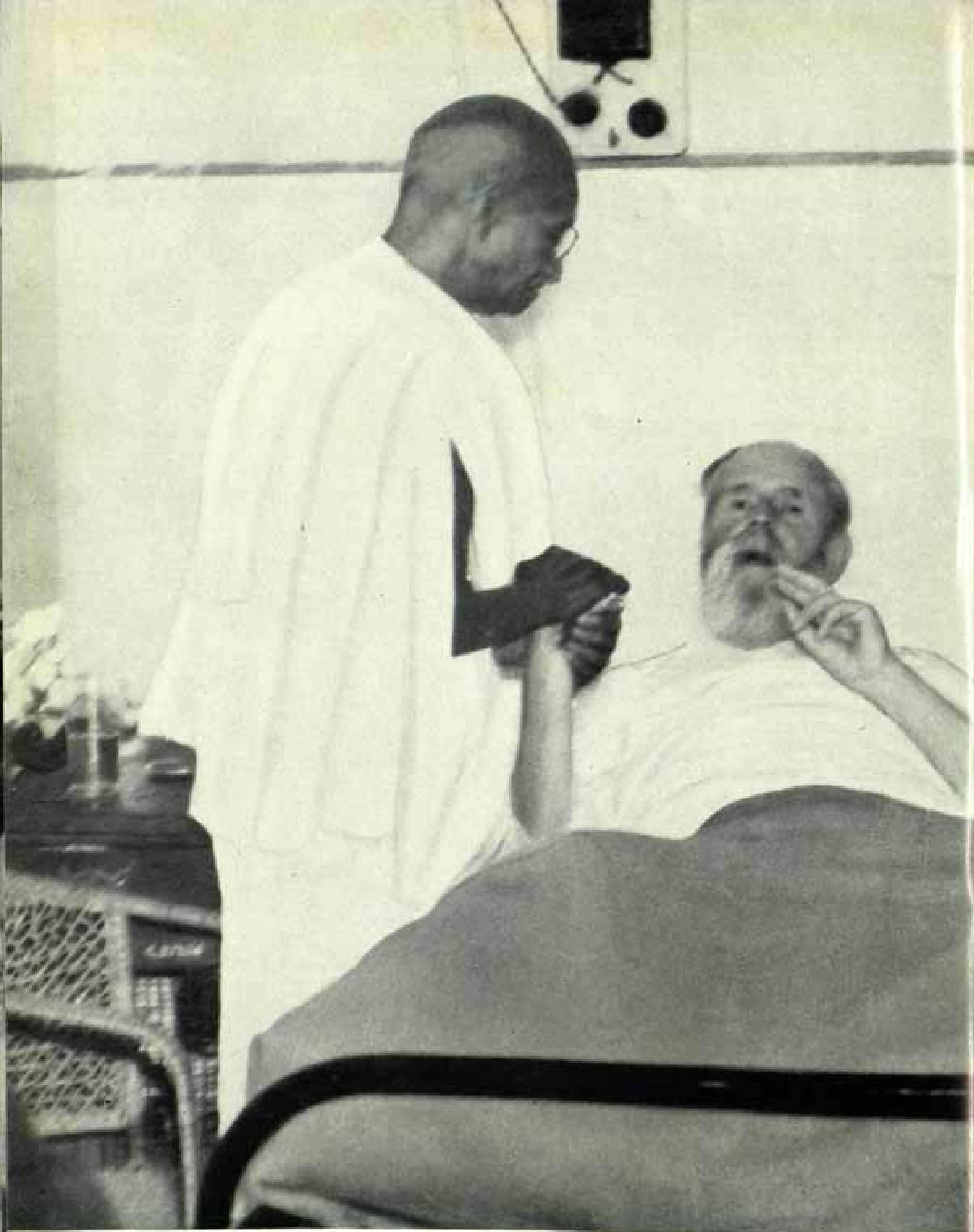
I look to you to keep your promise to sleep religiously for about an hour daily during the day.

Though I have always regarded Santiniketan as my second home, this visit has brought me nearer to it than ever before.

With reverent love,
Yours,
M. K. Gandhi

Courtesy : Visva-Bharati

Gandhi's letter to Tagore, February 19, 1940



From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Gandhi's visit to ailing Andrews at the Presidency Hospital, Calcutta, February 20, 1940

of the sangh. This does not by any means mean any reflection on such members or on political work. The resolution has to be taken because of the fact that the active participation of the members of the sangh in politics has aroused bitterness which is proof of the fact that their practice of ahimsa has been inadequate. Pure ahimsa must by its very nature preclude a reaction in *himsa*.

"It has always been the firm belief of the sangh that the amelioration of the millions of India is impossible without constructive work in which alone the masses can directly participate. Therefore, the sangh's activity will be confined in future to the constructive work, and it will address itself to that part of the constructive programme which at present does not come within the province of the A.-I.S.A., A.-I.V.I.A., etc., for example, the observation, study and research in the subject of the relation of constructive work to ahimsa and of the reaction of such work on individuals and society. And whereas there are not enough workers today capable of this special work, until men are available for the purpose of the study and research aforesaid, the activities of the sangh will be suspended save for the administration and disbursement of the sangh's funds among the paid workers and otherwise, and the publication of the monthly *Sarvodaya*.

"The membership of the sangh will be henceforth confined only to the following who will also constitute the executive committee of the sangh: Krishnadas Jaju, R. S. Dhotre, Kishorlal Mashruwala, Gopabandhu Chaudhuri, Abhayadevji, Satishchandra Dasgupta, Dilkhush Diwanji, Sitaram P. Patwardhan, Krishnadas Gandhi.

"And all the other members will be deemed to have resigned. It is also resolved that this executive committee will have all powers to amend or alter the constitution of the sangh and will exercise all the other powers of the sangh."

In the speech on the resolution, Gandhi explained how, though the sangh was radically altering its character, it looked forward to a purer and nobler reconstruction:

"We discovered our bankruptcy as we proceeded to find the body of workers who have to work as experts, in place of the existing body, and so we have had to draft a kind of interim resolution. There was no other alternative. The fact is that the sangh, which you thought was giving you inspiration and strength had really not done so. Its president did, not because he was the president but

because he is Kishorlal Mashruwala. Though if you cease to be members of the sangh, every one of you will represent in yourselves the ideal that the sangh stood for. When I disbanded the Satyagraha Ashram at Sabarmati, I told the members to become each of them a moving ashram. In the same way, each one of you have to become a moving Gandhi Seva Sangh. Every member will now do more self-introspection, and prepare himself for the task in front of him. Each one will go determined to fulfil in his life the ideals he is vowed to, ready, if need be, to face death with a will and cheer. If you do so, you will go to your homes light-heartedly and not in sorrow or depression. There is really no occasion for sorrow or depression. It is said that he is truly wise, who knows that he does not know. Well, we know that we have not lived up to our ideals, and we are casting off the burden of self-righteousness that bore us down. That knowledge should give you added strength, and in the course of time, you will tell Jajuji, the new president, that you would like to be enrolled as research member. The new committee is a nucleus of the body of experts that we hope will come into being some day. Even one research scholar, who has tackled the task with a will, will have continued the work of the sangh. The step taken today should not only cleanse us, but add to our strength. The constitution of the sangh was drafted in consultation with me by Kishorlal with infinite care and patience. It may also be that I am right. If I am—and I think I am—let me assure you, we are going a step further forward in our search after truth."

In an editorial, "The Right Step", Gandhi wrote:

"It was not without a pang that I advised the important step taken by the Gandhi Seva Sangh. The hara-kiri was performed when the sangh was in full bloom of life. For the past two years we, its builders, have been groping. We have been feeling that it was not performing the function worthy of its ideals. It has ever remained untouched by party or power politics. It was born to support and popularize the constructive part of the Congress programme. Kishorlal was wearing himself out to make it effective. But we were not satisfied with the result. With our vaunted boast, that as votaries of the Gita we were not concerned with results, there should have been no internal dissatisfaction. But it was there. The cause, as it has turned out, was not the poverty of results but the poverty of the mission. We were, at least I was, groping for the

exact mission of the sangh, apart from its function of being a distributing agency for funds donated or collected by Jamnalalji for the support of constructive Congress workers. It was in Malikanda that I discovered the central disease and the remedy. The sangh was a superfluity, so far as the mere carrying out of the constructive programme was concerned. For the necessity had brought into being the A.-I.S.A., Harijan Sevak Sangh, A.-I.V.I.A., and Talimi Sangh. Was there nothing else for the sangh to do which would be worthy of ability and sacrifice of workers like Kishorlal?

"Painfully the answer came in Malikanda. The sangh has to explore the possibilities of ahimsa in all walks of life. It has to find out whether, in reality, the activities, known as constructive, have vital connection with, or are inevitable consequences of, the application of ahimsa to national life. Ahimsa in theory, no one knows. It is as indefinable as God. But in its working, we get glimpses of it, as we have glimpses of Almighty in His working amongst and through us. It is the function of the sangh to apply their mind as scientists to this laborious task. The constructive activities of the different organizations furnish the sangh with ample data for its investigations. When the mission was discovered, we found that we were poor in missionaries for shouldering the tremendous responsibility. It is good that the discovery has been made. Without the past five years' incessant labour, it might not have been made. The sangh has been kept alive in the hope that the right men, may be women, would be forthcoming to approach the mission than which no nobler is to be found. Let the retiring members of the sangh know that for them, too, the work has only now begun. Let them become unseen and silent workers in the research laboratory and send their results to the sangh. Their legal connection with Kishorlal is now finished. The purer and unbreakable connection has only now begun. In the new president, the sangh has an equally well tried and equally conscientious worker. Jajuji is no philosopher, he is no writer. But he is more practical. He has been in charge of the Maharashtra branch of the A.-I.S.A. His labours have made of it the success it is.

"The reconstruction of the sangh is a right step. It must bear the right fruit."

During his stay in Malikanda, workers led by Manoranjan Babu went to see Gandhi for his advice on the difficulties of the Hindus

in the Noakhali district. "I feel quite sure," Gandhi said, "that no popularly elected Government can successfully cope with the widespread goondaism as it is alleged to be in Noakhali. It essentially is a case of self-defence. Self-respect and honour can't be protected by others. They are for each individual himself or herself to guard. Governments can at best punish the offenders after the offence has been committed. They cannot assure prevention, except in so far as punishment acts as a deterrent. Self-defence can be violent or non-violent. I have always advised and insisted on non-violent defence. But I recognize that it has to be learnt like violent defence. It requires a different training from that which is required for violent defence. Therefore, if the capacity for non-violent self-defence is lacking, there need be no hesitation in using violent means."

Manoranjan Babu, being an old Congressman, asked, "You say I cannot retaliate even in self-defence?"

"That is certainly my own view," Gandhi replied. "There was, however, a resolution passed by the Gaya Congress that the use of force in self-defence was permissible to Congressmen. But I have never justified the resolution. Non-violence becomes meaningless, if violence is permitted for self-defence. What is it but self-defence in national resistance against an aggressor nation? I would, therefore, advise you secession from the Congress, if you contemplate the use of force in defending yourselves in the circumstances described by you."

"But," said Manoranjan Babu, "supposing I adopt the Gaya resolution, would I be accused of communalism, if I defended the aggrieved Hindus?"

"Certainly not," replied Gandhi. "In the first place, you do not cease to be Hindu because you are a Congressman. You will, however, be guilty of communalism, if you sided with Hindus, right or wrong. In the case in point, you will defend Hindus, not because they are Hindus but because they are afflicted. I would even expect you to defend Musalmans, if you found them molested by Hindus. A Congressman recognizes or should recognize no communal distinction."

They discussed the Congress dissensions, and told Gandhi that many Hindus despairing of the Congress aid had joined the Hindu Mahasabha, and asked whether they too could do likewise. Gandhi replied that in theory he could see no objection. But whether the

local circumstances justified the step or not, he could not judge. But if he was a Congressman and found that as such he could not act effectively, he should not hesitate to join an organization which could render effective assistance. He added, however, that no responsible Congressman could hold office in a Congress organization and yet be a member of the Hindu Mahasabha, which was frankly a communal organization.

"The whole question bristles with difficulties," Gandhi further added. "The occasion demands calmness, truthfulness and boldness. Communalism is bound to win, if the Congress cannot become effectively non-violent. It will itself become communal in action, if it plays with non-violence. For the majority of Congressmen, who are Hindus, are bound to drift into violence, if they do not know the effective use of non-violence. I am quite clear in my mind that the Congress can remain non-communal only if it becomes truly non-violent in all matters. The Congress cannot be non-violent towards the rulers only, and violent towards others. That way lie disgrace and disaster."

The sangh session over, Gandhi proceeded to Patna to attend the Working Committee meeting held on February 28. In view of the critical situation, the committee recommended to the forthcoming annual session only the following resolution:

"This Congress, having considered the grave and critical situation resulting from the war in Europe and British policy in regard to it, approves of and endorses the resolutions passed and the action taken on the war situation by the A.-I.C.C. and the Working Committee. The Congress considers the declaration by the British Government of India as a belligerent country without reference to the people of India, and the exploitation of her resources in this war, as an affront to them which no self-respecting and freedom-loving people can accept or tolerate. The recent pronouncements made on behalf of the British Government in regard to India demonstrate that Great Britain is carrying on the war fundamentally for the imperialist ends and for the preservation and strengthening of her empire, which is based on the exploitation of the people of India, as well as of the other Asiatic and African countries. Under these circumstances, it is clear that the Congress cannot in any way, directly or indirectly, be party to the war, which means the continuance and perpetuation of this exploitation. The Congress,

therefore, strongly disapproves of the Indian troops being made to fight for Great Britain and of the drain from India of men and material for the purpose of the war. Neither the recruiting nor the money raised in India can be considered to be the voluntary contributions from India. Congressmen, and those under the Congress influence, cannot help in the prosecution of the war with men, or money or material.

"The Congress hereby declares again that nothing short of complete independence can be accepted by the people of India. Indian freedom cannot exist within the orbit of imperialism, and dominion status or any other status within the imperial structure is wholly inapplicable to India, is not in keeping with the dignity of a great nation, and would bind India in many ways to the British policies and economic structure. The people of India alone can properly shape their own constitution and determine their relations to the other countries of the world, through a constituent assembly elected on the basis of adult suffrage.

"The Congress is further of opinion that while it will always be ready, as it ever has been, to make every effort to secure communal harmony, no permanent solution is possible except through a constituent assembly, where the rights of all recognized minorities will be fully protected by agreement, as far as possible, between the elected representatives of various majority and minority groups, or by arbitration, if agreement is not reached on any point. Any alternative will lack finality. The constitution of India must be based on independence, democracy and national unity, and the Congress repudiates attempts to divide India or to split up India's nationhood. The Congress has always aimed at a constitution where the fullest freedom and opportunities of development are guaranteed to the group and the individual, and social injustice yields place to a juster social order.

"The Congress cannot admit the right of the rulers of the Indian states or of foreign vested interests, to come in the way of India's freedom. Sovereignty in India must rest with the people, whether in the states or in the provinces, and all the other interests must be subordinated to their vital interests. The Congress holds that the difficulty raised in regard to the states is of British creation, and it will not be satisfactorily solved, unless the declaration of the freedom of India from foreign rule is unequivocally made. The foreign

interests, if they are not in conflict with the interests of the Indian people, will be protected.

"The Congress withdrew the ministries from all the provinces where the Congress had a majority, in order to dissociate India from the war and to enforce the Congress determination to free India from the foreign domination. This preliminary step naturally must be followed by civil disobedience, to which the Congress will unhesitatingly resort as soon as the Congress organization is considered fit enough for the purpose, or in case circumstances shape themselves as to precipitate a crisis. The Congress desires to draw the attention of all Congressmen to Gandhiji's declaration that he can only undertake the responsibility of declaring civil disobedience when he is satisfied that they are strictly observing discipline and are carrying out the constructive programme as prescribed in the Independence Pledge.

"The Congress seeks to represent and serve all classes and communities without distinction of race or religion, and the struggle for Indian independence is for the freedom of the whole nation. Hence the Congress cherishes the hope that all classes and communities will take part in it. The purpose of civil disobedience is to evoke the spirit of sacrifice in the whole nation.

"The Congress hereby authorizes the A.-I.C.C. and, in the event of this being necessary, the Working Committee, to take all steps to implement the foregoing resolution, as the committee concerned may deem necessary."

Commenting on the resolution, Gandhi wrote:

"The question has come from London whether the Congress has closed the door to negotiation and compromise. My interpretation of the resolution is that the Congress has not closed the door. It has been closed by Lord Zetland. There can be no negotiation on his terms, so far as the Congress is concerned. India will not be a helpless partner in her own exploitation and foreign domination. The Congress will not rest till India is a free country as Britain is. And if India accepts non-violence as her settled policy, she will be freer than Britain. Britain, which has ruled the waves, is in danger of losing her own liberty. I have prescribed a remedy which is foolproof. Whether the Congress will be instrumental in gaining India's freedom or not is a different question. The resolution states in unequivocal terms that the Congress will enter into no compromise

that gives India less. The other thing that the Congress has made clear is that the British aim being known to be no other than the consolidation of the British Empire, the India that is influenced by the Congress can be no party to the present war. In other words, the Congress cannot give Britain its moral support. The third thing the resolution makes clear is that the fight, whenever it comes, will be strictly non-violent and, therefore, under severe discipline. The choice will be Britain's, not that of the Congress, whether India is once more to be a prison-house for those who will rather be prisoners and even go through greater sufferings than be helpless witnesses of their country's continuous subordination to Great Britain or to any other power."

Ramgarh Congress

1940

On his return to Wardha, Gandhi notified on March 5, 1940, the change in his address from Segaon to Sevagram. He wrote: "It is a name with a meaning. It means a village dedicated to service." His first editorial written from Sevagram was "When?":

"Everybody is asking me not whether but when I am to call the country to civil disobedience. Some of my questioners are the most sober among co-workers. To them, the Patna resolution has no other meaning than that the struggle's coming is a question of days. It is proof that the country or that part of it that has hitherto taken part in the struggle for freedom is tired of waiting and suspense. It is heartening to think that there are so many persons who count no sacrifice too dear for gaining independence.

"While, therefore, I admire the zeal of my questioners, I must warn them against being impatient. There is nothing in the resolution to warrant the belief that the atmosphere is suitable for declaring civil disobedience. It will be suicidal to declare it when there is so much indiscipline and violence within the Congress itself. Congressmen will make a serious mistake, if they do not give full weight to my words. I cannot and will not start mass civil disobedience, so long as I am not convinced that there is enough discipline and enough non-violence in the Congress ranks. The apathy about the constructive programme, spinning and sales of khadi, I take to be positive signs of unbelief. Battle through such instruments is foredoomed to failure. Such persons should know that I am not their man. If there is no hope of attaining the necessary measure of discipline and non-violence, it would be better to let me retire from leadership.

"Let it be clearly understood that I cannot be hustled into precipitating the struggle. They err grievously who think that I can ever declare civil disobedience, having been driven there to by the

so-called leftists. I make no such distinction between rightists and leftists. Both are my co-workers and friends. He will be a bold man who can with any measure of certainty draw a line of demarcation between leftists and rightists. Congressmen and non-Congressmen should also know that, even if the whole country were to turn against me, I must, when the time comes, fight single-handed. The others have or may have weapons besides non-violence. I have no choice. Being the author of non-violent technique in the political field, I am bound to fight when I feel the urge from within.

"It is inherent in the technique that I never know the time-table in advance. The call may come at any time. It need not be described as from God. The inner urge is a current phrase easily understood. Everybody sometimes acts upon the inner urge. Such action need not always be right. But there is no other explanation possible for certain actions.

"The thought often comes to me that it would be a good thing if the Congress could forget me. I do sometimes feel that with my strange views of life, I am a misfit in the Congress. Whatever special qualifications I may possess, and for which the Congress and the country may have use, can perhaps be better utilized, if I were wholly out of from the Congress. But I know that this severance cannot be brought about mechanically or violently. It will come in its own time, if it has to come. Only Congressmen should know my limitations and they should not be surprised or grieved if they find me stiff and unbending. I ask them to believe me, when I say that I am incapable of acting without the fulfilment of the conditions laid down for declaring mass civil disobedience."

The resolution on the war adopted by the Working Committee at Patna evoked a strong protest from a responsible Englishman. "The letter," observed Gandhi, "represents the thoughts of many Englishmen who are well disposed towards the Congress. And yet it betrays a tragic ignorance of Indian thought. Thus the writer says, 'What are we to make of the committee's latest move and of what appears to be a rather sudden and drastic change from a demand for dominion status to one for complete independence?'

"Now Complete Independence has been the definite goal of the Congress since 1929, and has been repeated every year from thousands of platforms. From that year to this, the Congress has never even so much as mentioned dominion status. There is, therefore, no

change whatsoever in the Congress demand. The question of suddenness or drasticness simply does not arise. Confusion arises from my oft-quoted letter to Mr. Polak wherein I said in 1937 that, if dominion status with the right to secede was offered, I would accept it. I had no authority to bind anyone else to that statement. Needless to say, the offer was never made. Whatever may be said of me, no charge of change of policy can be brought against the Congress. So far as I am concerned, I have changed. Experience since gained and maturer reflection have led me to think that dominion status of Westminster variety cannot suit India's case.

"When the writer thinks that India cannot yet stand on her own legs, he has not even dominion status in contemplation. Dominion status is nothing, if it does not mean the ability of the dominion in question to stand by itself.

"What the Congress has definitely asked for is Britain's declaration that Britain will give effect to the decisions of a duly elected constituent assembly. In other words, Britain should recognize the right of India, without any outside interference or influence, to determine her own future. It may be even dominion status. It may be less than independence or a modified form of it. It may also be complete independence. The Congress will not lower its flag. But the constituent assembly is not synonymous with the Congress. The assembly will include the representatives of all the parties who can secure sufficient votes. Therefore, all minorities will be represented in their full strength.

"It is a great pity that even the best of Englishmen are, as a rule, woefully ignorant of the Indian claim. They are too self-satisfied to take the trouble of studying the Indian case. They will not read the nationalist papers. They take their opinions from the Anglo-Indian papers, which themselves generally betray amazing ignorance about the thoughts, aspirations and acts of nationalist India. It has been the lot of the Congress to be misrepresented from its inception. I suggest that the responsible Englishmen should meet, say, the best known Congressmen of the left and the right schools of thought, and I promise that much misunderstanding will be removed. It may be that even then there will be honest differences of opinion. These will always exist.

"The writer also dreads to think what will happen to India if the Englishmen were to vacate the country bag and baggage. Such a

contingency is inconceivable in a non-violent struggle. The end of non-violent action is a friendly settlement. If the writer means merely the English soldiers, they will certainly go if they will not serve independent India, or if they are not wanted because they are too expensive, or for any other cause. It must not be forgotten that the Indian struggle is not anti-British, it is anti-exploitation, anti-foreign rule, not anti-foreigners. Underlying the writer's fear is the possibility of India deciding upon something beyond its capacity. This honest English belief in the incapacity of India to come to a sane judgement or to defend herself against civil war or foreign aggression is perhaps the greatest stumbling block in the way of an honourable settlement. If the fear is justified, the only antidote is to run the risk and let her learn wisdom and the art of self-defence by becoming free. Any other course means almost perpetual helplessness and foreign domination. Surely it is better for India, England and the world, that a helpless sub-continent runs the greatest risk for coming into its own than that in its sickness it becomes a dead weight to itself and the world. The writer seems to admit the wrong Britain has done. It will not be undone by Britain being the judge of India's destiny and cherishing the distant hope that one day she will be fit enough to shoulder full responsibility for internal and external defence. The very argument advanced by the writer against India determining her future seems to me to be conclusive for ending British rule at the earliest moment possible.

"If the position taken up by me is the correct one, the Nazi or the Bolshevik menace can have no meaning for nationalist India, especially as its defence is rooted in non-violence.

"The writer evidently has no faith in non-violence of the strong. I must wholly disagree with him when he says, 'Non-violence, I admit, is a powerful weapon against people with some prejudices against the physical coercion of those who do not defend themselves, but I doubt its efficacy against those who regard the whole idea with contempt.' The real test of non-violence lies in its being brought in contact with just those who have contempt for it. The writer would be right if he were to say that such unadulterated non-violence has not yet been used by the Congress. The answer then would be that I am trying my utmost to present India, and through her the world, with a completed example of non-violence. I may fail. But I invite Englishmen to assist me in the experiment

if they have even a faint belief in the possibility of the exercise of such non-violence.

"With the poor opinion the writer has of the working of non-violence, it is no wonder that he trembles at the thought, when the British retire from India, 'of a number of large and fierce gentlemen who were literally gloating at the prospect of enjoying themselves at India's expense, once the English were gone'. It is likely that an assembly of elected men and women, who had such a fear, would sign their death warrant by asking the English to retire in order that they may be devoured by 'large and fierce gentlemen' of the Frontier! I suggest to the writer that, if and when the English retire, both the Muslims and the Hindus will find it profitable to live in peace as they used to do before the British advent. If there had been perpetual quarrels, one or the other would have been wiped out. When the real independence comes to India, Congresses and Leagues will be nowhere, unless they represent the real opinion of the country. The presence of the British bayonet has created artificial condition which suppresses the natural play of human action and demoralizes both the suppressed and the suppressors. Let me also add that the presence of the British forces has not prevented the riots such as were seen in Sukkur, or the kidnappings and the raids on the Frontier. Whatever success the forces achieve, is after the events have happened. The sufferers are no better off for the punitive measures, nor is it possible to say that at least in the majority of such cases full reparation is made.

"That the Congress resistance at this stage will embitter English mind and will be remembered against India, is a possibility. But my own experience of human nature, not excluding the British, is that bitternesses are forgotten when the parties wish to come together. The suggestion presupposes the crushing of civil disobedience. But there is no such thing in the civil disobedience dictionary. If there is violence, it will certainly be crushed, because violence can only end in a disgraceful rout. There never has been previous preparation; the people themselves will be bewildered. The people would not know what to do. But if, in spite of all the precautions I may take for a non-violent struggle, bitterness is still to be the residue, even that risk has to be run. Before the throne of the Almighty, man will be judged not by his acts but by his intentions. For God alone reads our hearts. Freedom's battles are not fought without paying

heavy prices. Just as man would not cherish the thought of living in a body other than his own, so do nations not like to live under other nations, however noble and great the latter may be. Englishmen, who are now undergoing tremendous sacrifices for preserving their freedom, should not fail to appreciate India's travail. The Congress does not say, 'Give us Congressmen what we want.' It says to the rulers, 'Not you, but the elected representatives of the nation should decide its fate.' If such a reasonable proposition is circumvented, what should the Congress do?"

In the next issue of *Harijan*, there was an editorial on "Another Englishman's Letter". "The Congress," wrote Gandhi, "has never taken up an uncompromising attitude and within the four corners of its demand has always shown its readiness for 'a settlement'. Its demand is unequivocal. It says to the British Government: 'If you really mean to part with power and your war is not for consolidating your empire but for democracy all round, then you will declare India a free country and let a constituent assembly elected on the basis of adult suffrage decide upon the form and content of her own government. No doubt there are difficulties, for example, about defence, about minorities, and about the princes. The burden of solving these difficulties will be shifted from you to the constituent assembly. If the assembly cannot solve these satisfactorily, it will prove its insolvency. You will have done your duty.' Surely in this, there is no one-sided dictation.

"The writer reminds me of the war condition and he suggests in effect that it does not improve one's temper. I should say that a problem like India is a direct issue in the war; perhaps, fortunes of this war will turn upon the conduct of nationalist India. People engaged in a war do not lose temper over the matters which affect the fortunes of war.

"I have no difficulty in endorsing the suggestion that some work prior to the constituent assembly should be done. The writer suggests 'a very responsible conference of a dozen representatives'. The difficulty is of choosing the representatives. Who will choose them? They cannot command confidence, unless they are duly elected. And such a committee, so far as I can see, can only be appointed by the members of the constituent assembly. I think the day is gone, when any party worth the name will accept as representatives the Government nominees, as was done at the Round Table Conference.

"The Congress has to be and is prepared for 'war'. But it wants to avoid 'war'. It will not wantonly act, so as to be the cause of endless suffering to the people. The Congress is ready to 'meet the *de facto* Government on procedure.' Is the latter willing and ready to recognize India as a free country? The Congress history shows that it has always met and is today ready to meet the views of the other parties on most matters. What it is not ready to do is to alter the goal. It must be content to be reduced to a hopeless minority for the sake of preserving its goal. It is a trust which it cannot abandon without being disloyal to its past. The end of non-violent 'war' is always an agreement, never dictation, much less humiliation of the opponent. There can be no question of the Congress asking or expecting Britain to dishonour just obligations or treaties.

"What, however, I miss is a sincere desire on the part of Great Britain to do unto India what she would wish done to her, if the position were reversed. The Congress is unreasonable, if it is wrong for it to refuse to abate the passion for freedom for which Dadabhai laboured, which Tilak taught India to regard as her birthright, and for which thousands of men and women have cheerfully suffered imprisonment and the loss of their possessions. If it is allowed as a worthy passion, the Congress has no fear as to the verdict of being regarded as eminently reasonable in everything else."

On the eve of the Congress session, in mid-March, Sir Michael O'Dwyer was shot dead in Caxton Hall, London; Lord Zetland, Secretary of State for India, was also wounded. "I regard this act as one of insanity," observed Gandhi. "I would like every Indian patriot to share with me the shame of this act. If we are to fight fairly and squarely, we must, as far as is humanly possible, make every Englishman feel that he is as safe in our midst, as he is in his own home. It fills me with shame and sorrow that for some time at least every Indian face in London will be suspect. Is it not possible for us all to realize that the masses will never mount to freedom through murder? I would like every reader of these lines to know that every such act harms our non-violent struggle, and, therefore, to dissociate himself in the secret of his heart and openly from such acts of insanity."

On March 14, Gandhi opened the khadi exhibition at Ramgarh, Bihar. "You can show the villagers," he observed, "that they have in their possession crafts that can stand the invasion of bombs from

the aeroplanes. But they are ignorant of their treasures which have been mostly looted, and are on the brink of extinction. We have to awaken them to a sense of those treasures and dispel their ignorance and darkness. That is the function of these exhibitions."

"The true Indian civilization," he said, "is in the Indian villages. The modern city civilization that you find in Europe and America, and in a handful of our cities, which are the copies of the western cities and which were built for the foreigner and by him. But they cannot last. It is only the handicraft civilization that will endure and stand the test of time. But it can do so only, if we can correlate the intellect with the hand."

The first sitting of the Subjects Committee was held on March 17. Rajendra Prasad moved a resolution on "India and the war crisis", which the Working Committee had adopted at Patna. Nehru supported it. In all, twenty-seven amendments were moved of which fourteen were withdrawn. All the rest were defeated and the original resolution was adopted by a majority of 2,500 to 15. The only resolution passed at Ramgarh declared that "nothing short of Complete Independence can be accepted by the people of India and that no permanent solution is possible except through constituent assembly". It further stated that, under the circumstances, the Congress and those under the Congress influence could not help in the prosecution of the war with men, money or material.

For the first time during the last six years, that is, since his retirement from the Congress, Gandhi expressed his desire to address the Subjects Committee and also the delegates. At about ten in the night, March 18, Gandhi addressed the meeting and nearly 20,000 people listened to him in perfect silence:

"Since I went out of the Congress at Bombay, there has been an understanding between me and the Congress Working Committee that I should not be asked to speak at the A.-I.C.C. meeting or the Subjects Committee or the open session, and should be allowed to conserve the little strength that is left in me. I have usually been attending the meetings of the Congress Working Committee. On this occasion, I myself suggested that I should address the Subjects Committee and also the delegates. The Working Committee agreed to this and, although I wanted to address you before the resolution was adopted, the Working Committee suggested that I do so after the resolution was disposed of.

From Sumati Morarjee Collection

On the way to an annual conference of Gandhi Seva Sangh, Malikanda, February 1940

Gandhi inspecting volunteers' camp at Ramgarh Congress, March 1940

From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Reception on the A.-I.V.I.A. Exhibition grounds, Ramgarh Congress

From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Gandhi declaring open the A.-I.V.I.A. Exhibition, Ramgarh Congress, March 14, 1940

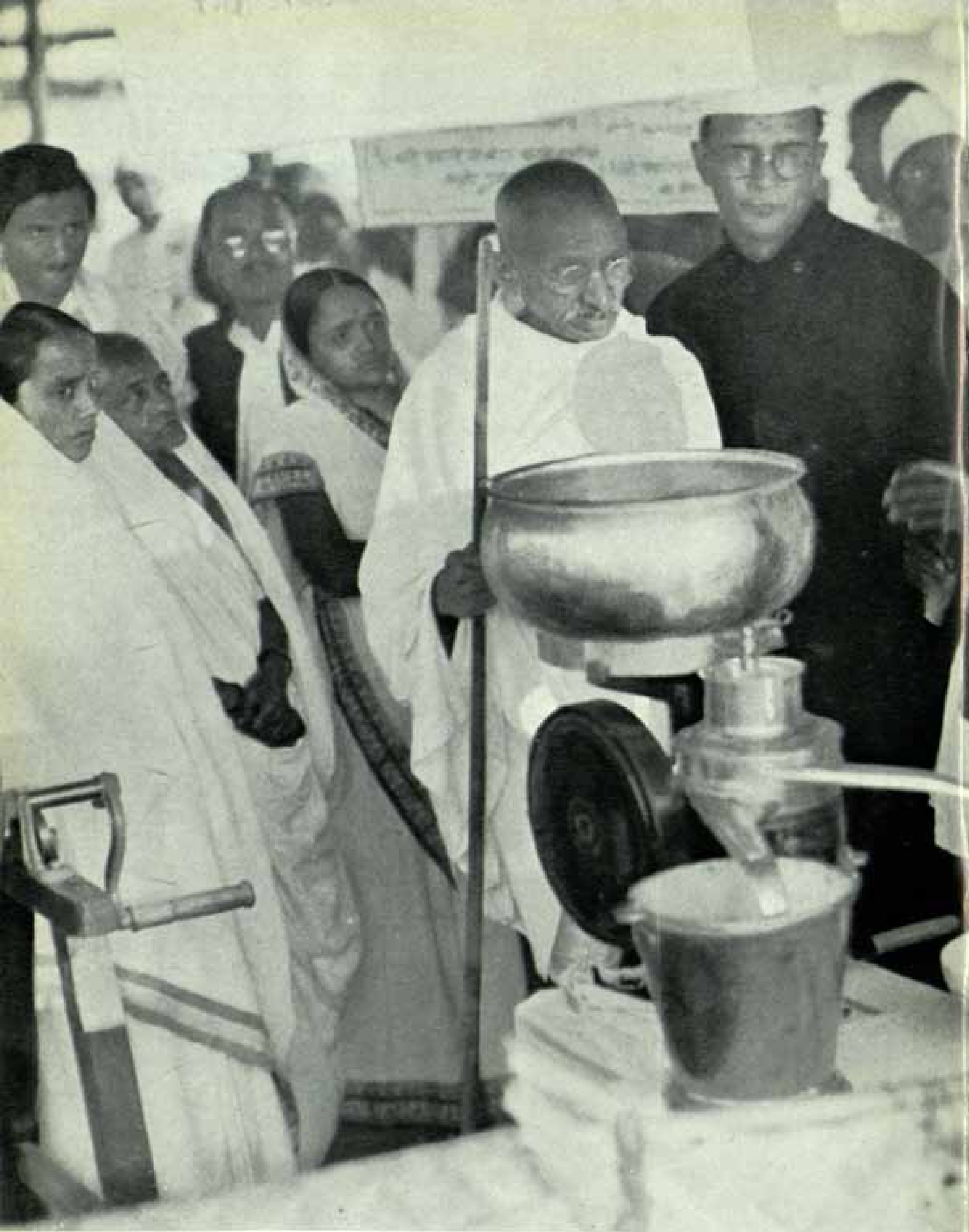
Adivasi greets Gandhi with a khadi piece

Inspecting the A.-I.V.I.A. exhibition,



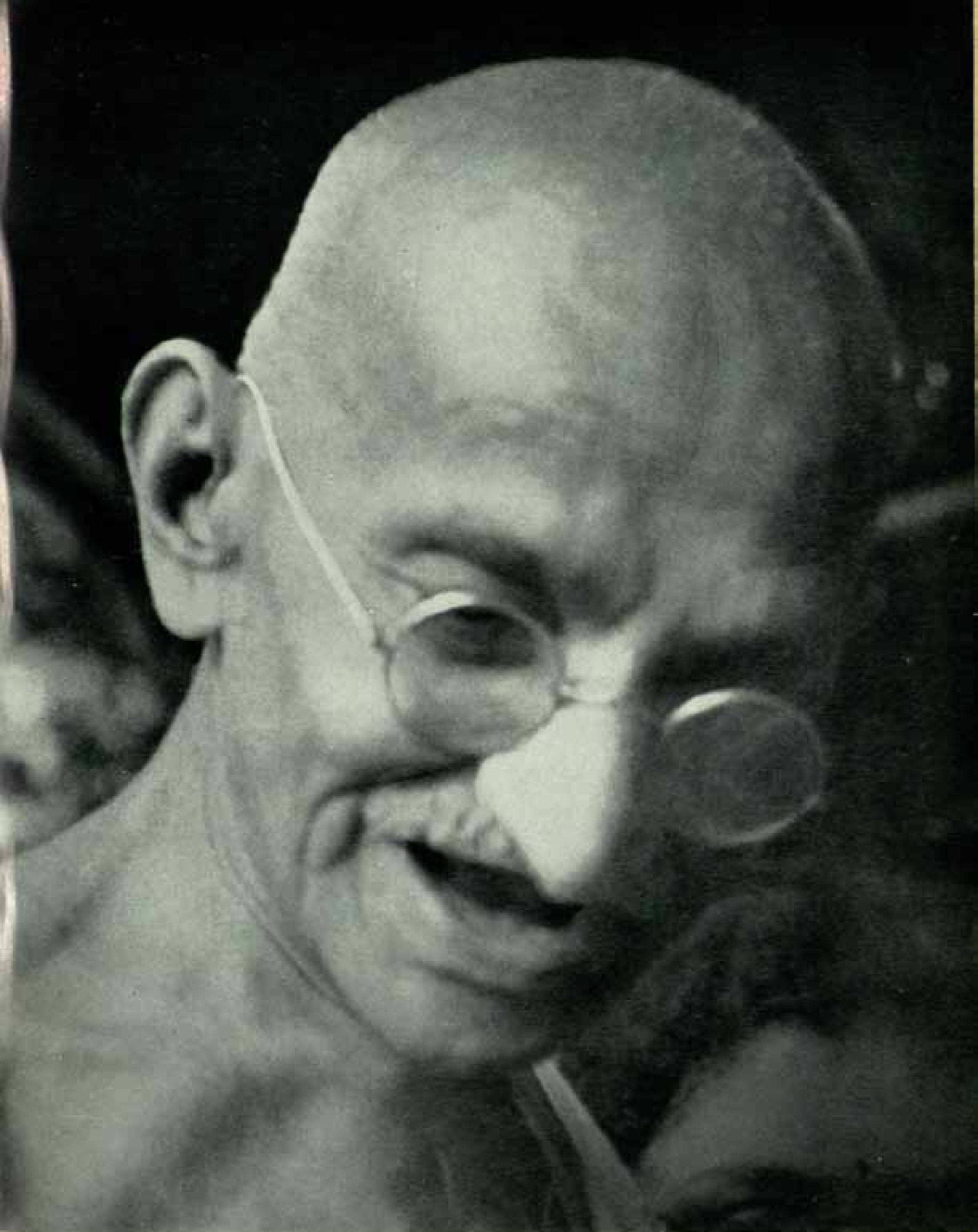
From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Ramgarh Congress, March 1940



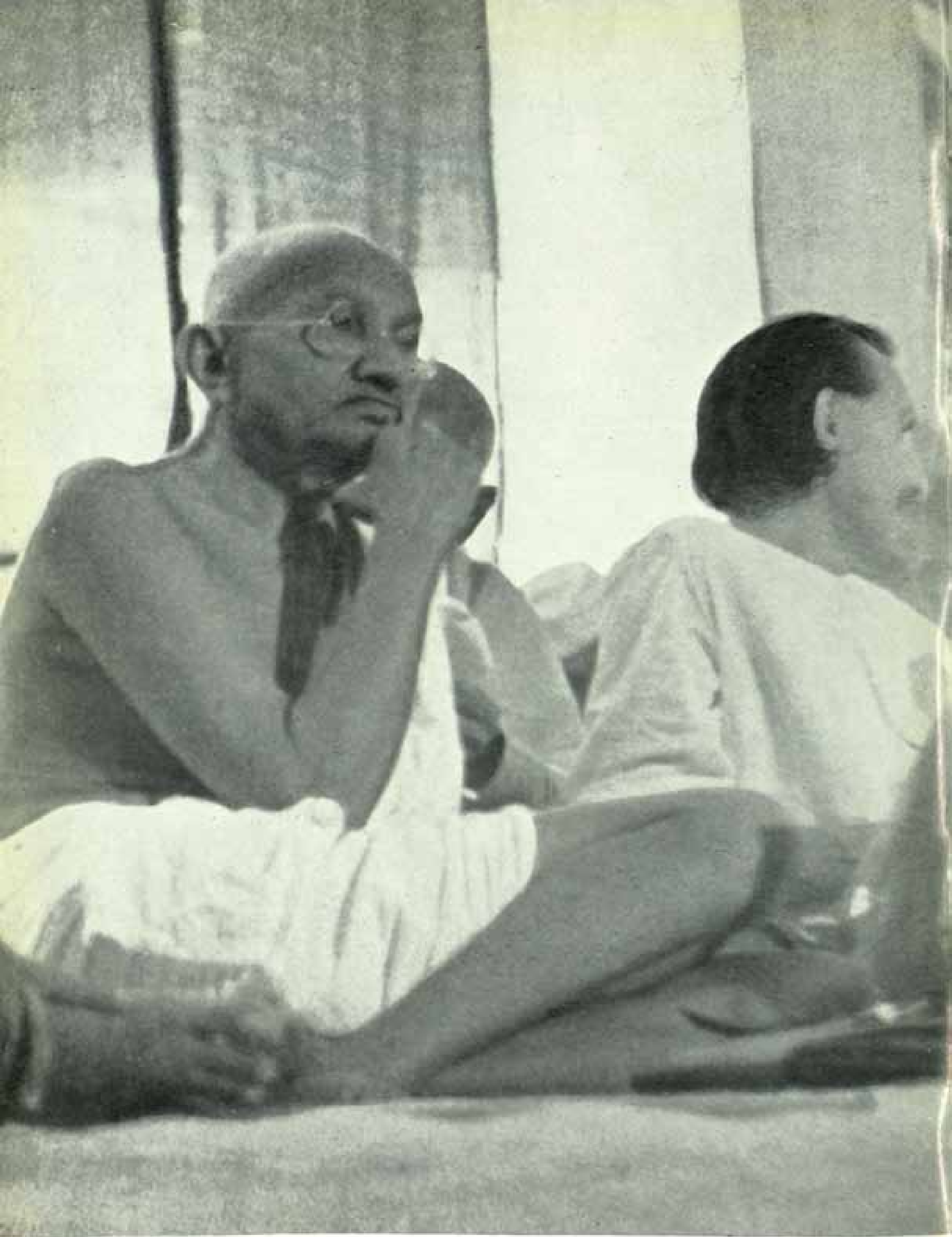
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At the exhibition stall, Ramgarh, March 1940



Photograph: Kanu Gandhi

Gandhi, March 1940



Listening to a stormy debate during the Subjects Committee

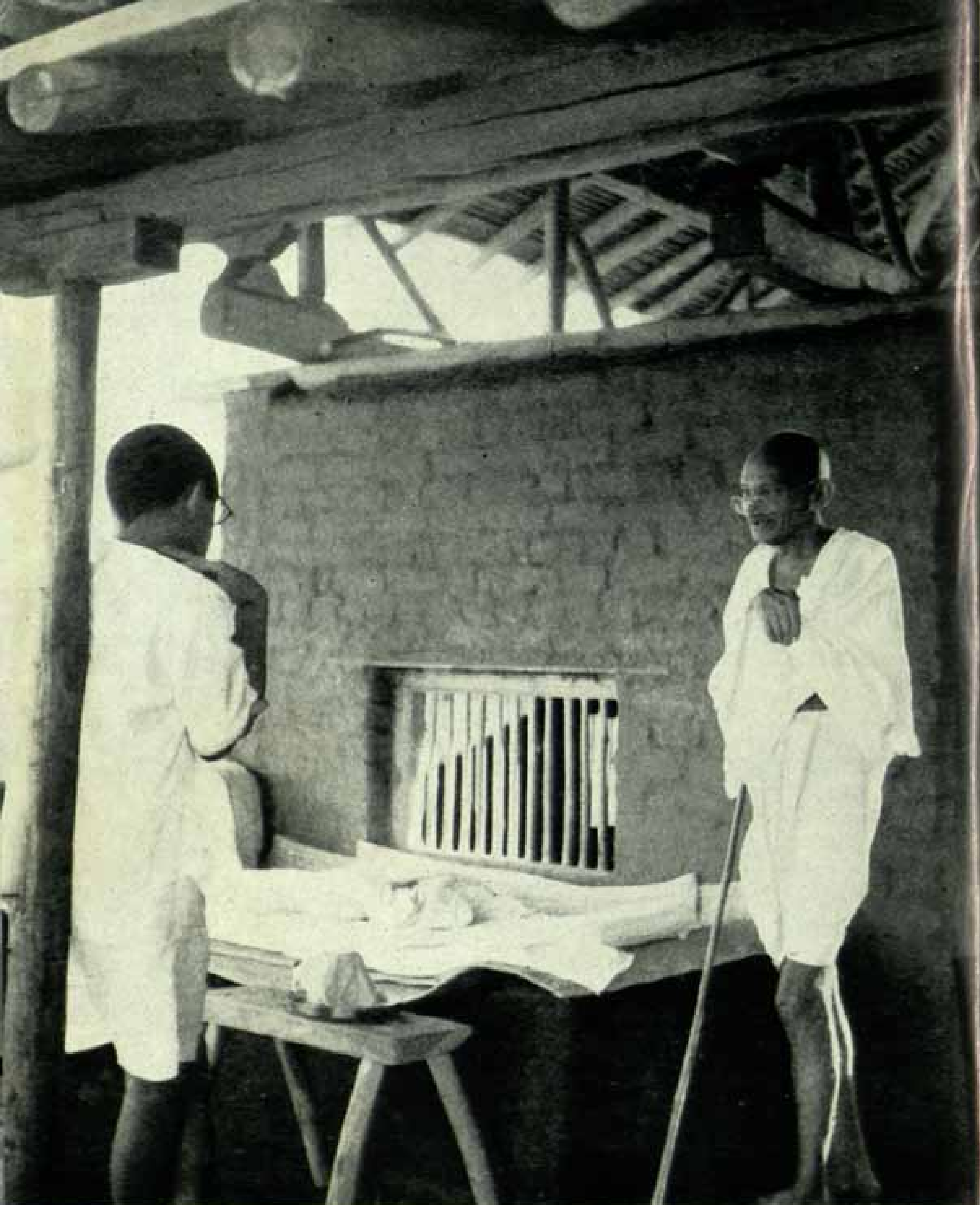
Photograph : D. G. Tendulkar

meeting at the Ramgarh Congress, March 17, 1940

Gandhi enjoys adverse criticism during the Subjects

Photograph : D. G. Tendulkar

Committee meeting, Ramgarh Congress, March 17, 1940



Photograph : Kanu Gandhi

Gandhi's visit to an ailing ashram inmate, Sevagram, March 1940

"It was my desire to see the faces of you all and also give you an opportunity of looking at me and finding out if there had been any change in me since my retirement in Bombay. Fifty years of public life have given me the capacity to read your faces. I have during these years created many institutions, met thousands and tens of thousand of people, and it should not, therefore, be difficult for me to get at the back of your minds. But my desire to see you was in order to find out where I was.

"You have, I see, made considerable progress in the art of debate and I congratulate you, for in a democratic organization the power of persuasion and a high level of debate are essential. I have also seen that the number of amendments you move has also increased, and it is well that you would all be anxious to press new points of view, though I cannot congratulate you on some of the amendments which were either frivolous or absurd.

"You have adopted the resolution practically unanimously as there were only seven or eight dissentients. That adds to my responsibility, for I have been witness to the debate. If I had so desired, I should have warned you before voting, but I accepted the suggestion of the Working Committee that I should not address the house before the resolution was passed.

"I do not want to reply to what has been said by some of you in the course of debate. But I do want to say that, though there was a time in my life when I launched movements even if some of my conditions had not been fulfilled, I am now going to be hard, not for the sake of being hard, but because a general who has to lead the army must let the army know his conditions beforehand.

"Let me then tell you that, I do not see at the present moment conditions propitious for an immediate launching of the campaign. We are hemmed in with difficulties greater than those we had to face in the past. They are both external and internal. The external difficulties are due to the fact that we have declared unmistakably what we want and the Government have also declared their intentions as clearly as possible. Then there is the fact that the British Government are engaged in a world war and naturally, if we engage them in a fight, we ask for enough trouble.

"What, however, appals me is our internal difficulties. I have often said that external difficulties need never frighten a satyagrahi. On the contrary, he flourishes on the external difficulties and faces

them with redoubled zeal and vigour. Today the situation is almost the reverse. Our external difficulties do not find us stronger and more united. Our internal difficulties are increasing. Our Congress registers are full of bogus members and members who have swelled them because they know that getting into the Congress means getting into power. Those who, therefore, never before thought of entering the Congress have come into it and corrupted it. And how can we prevent the people from coming into a democratic organization because they come from selfish motives? We have not that discipline and not the strength and purity of public opinion which would compel such people to stay out.

"This strength and purity cannot come, so long as we approach the primary members only once in a year for the vote. There is no discipline in our ranks and they have been divided up into groups which strive to gain more and more power. Non-violence as between ourselves does not seem to us to be necessary. There may be groups, but they should strengthen and not weaken and destroy the organization.

"Ours has been both a democratic organization and a fighting organization, ever since we re-organized it in 1920. We have used even military language, though in a non-violent sense. Well, then, I want to repeat what I have said times without number that, if you will be soldiers in my army, understand that there is no room for democracy in that organization. The army may be a part of a democratic organization, but there can be no democracy in it, as there can be none in its rank, as there is none in our various organizations—A.-I.S.A. and A.-I.V.I.A. and so on. In an army, the general's word is law, and his conditions cannot be relaxed.

"I am supposed to be your general, but I do not know a more feeble general in history. My only sanction is the love and affection in which you hold me. But it has its weakness, as it has its strength. I know that you love me. Does your love translate itself into action? If it does not, if it does not mean ever-increasing discipline and ever-increasing response to what I say, let me declare to you that I cannot launch civil disobedience, and you must select another general. You cannot make me your general on your terms. Know, therefore, that I will insist on my conditions. The conditions are inexorable, and if you do not observe them, I will automatically withdraw.

"The general of a military army insists on strict discipline. I go on arguing with you, because my only sançtion is love. I say to you, therefore, that unless you accept my conditions and unless you have faith in them, as you have in me, you should not think of going to jail. If you will go to jail, you have to pay the price. Ours is a civil fight, and imprisonment as a civil prisoner has got to be earned by the strict observance of the programme. Otherwise, even the thieves and dacoits also fill the jails, but they do not carry the country to freedom.

"Well, then, I laid down the conditions in 1920 and have never ceased to repeat them. You may not believe in the programme, you may have grown wiser since then, but I have not. My faith in it has increased with the years and I see more virtues in it than I saw before.

"I turned a rebel against this Government in 1919, but before that I was as loyal to it as any Britisher. It is that unique loyalty that gave me the unique power of civil disobedience, and the unquenchable spirit of search. I, therefore, go on making my experiments and also go on declaring my mistakes, whenever I discover them. I am an erring mortal like you. I have never, even in my dream, thought that I was a mahatma and that others were *alpatma* (little soul). We are all equal before our Maker—Hindus, Muslims, Parsis, Christians—worshippers of one God. Why then do we fight among ourselves?

"We are all brothers—even the Qaid-e-Azam is my brother. I have meant all that I have said about him, never has a frivolous word escaped my lips, and I say that I want to win him over. A speaker said that I would not fight until I had won him over, and he was right. There was a time, when there was not one Muslim whose confidence I did not enjoy. Today, I have forfeited that confidence and most of the Urdu press pours abuse on me. But I am not sorry for it. It only confirms me in my belief that there is no swaraj without a settlement with the Musalmans.

"You will perhaps ask, in that case, why am I talking of a fight. I do so in order to have a constituent assembly which means agreement and settlement. But if the Musalmans will have nothing to do with it, I will understand that there is no settlement. I am also a reader of the Koran like them, and I will tell them that the Koran makes no distinction between the Hindus and the Musalmans. But

if they feel that they should have the Heaven without the Hindus, I will not grudge it to them.

"I have no ill will towards Englishmen. When I heard that Lord Zetland was wounded, my heart was wounded. That is my temperament. I, therefore, always work with and for goodwill for them. That I want to destroy British imperialism is another matter, but I want to do so by converting those who are associated with it. If non-violence has the power that I attribute to it, it is sure to react on the opponent. If it does not, the fault will be mine, not that of non-violence.

"You must, therefore, understand that you have to deal with a dangerous man who will land you in unexpected situations. Compromise is a part and parcel of my nature. I will go to the Viceroy fifty times, if I feel like it. I went to Lord Reading whilst non-co-operation was going on. I would not only go to the Viceroy when invited, but I would even seek the opportunities to go to him, if necessary. And you must know that, if I do so, I do it in order to strengthen our cause and not weaken it. It happened so with General Smuts. At the last moment I telephoned to him. He put the receiver down in anger, but I thrust myself on him. As a result, he relented and I was in a stronger position. Today, we are friends. I could not have fought the Dutch and the English without love in my heart for them, and without a readiness for compromise. But my compromises will never be at the cost of the cause or of the country.

"One amendment was to the effect that the word 'mass' be inserted before 'civil disobedience'. Well, if it is not mass civil disobedience, is it to be the civil disobedience of a handful? In that case, I should not have come to you. It is the thought of mass civil disobedience that keeps my mind awake all the twenty-four hours. Why should a man of seventy trifle with a thing of this kind?

"Therefore, let me tell you that there is no civil disobedience, until I feel that you are ready. You have, therefore, to purify every Congress committee and make it a satyagrahi unit. To that extent, it will have to cease to be a democracy, because my word will be law. But if it does not become such a unit, millions of our dumb countrymen will be sacrificed. None of my campaigns has crushed or ruined the masses. They have increased their stature, and it is in order to take it still higher that I want to live. There was in the earlier campaigns enough of violence of thought and word, but

there was non-violence in act, and, therefore, masses were saved. I would not light-heartedly imperil those masses today, and that is why I insist on the strictest non-violence and the fulfilment of my conditions. For that is the only link that binds them and me.

"If I am your general, your pulse should be in my hands. Otherwise I cannot fight through you. I can fight single-handed, but for that fight, I need not come and argue with you.

"One last word, before I close. I do not want to stand in the way of those who want to fight at once. But, if they have any sense of honour, I should advise them to do so after getting out of the Congress. Let me assure them that if they put up a non-violent fight and carry it through, I shall follow their lead.

"Of course, it is open to them to remain in the Congress and to defy it, but it will not be satyagraha. Those who are impatient today do not know the power of satyagraha.

"The resolution does not bind you. If you do not accept the conditions, you can still say you do not accept them, and you can have the resolution reversed. That will free you and me both. But if you accept the conditions and will observe them, you may be sure that it need not take me a month to launch the struggle."

The open session of the Congress met on March 19 under the presidentship of Azad who had defeated Mr. M. N. Roy, the rival candidate, by 1,864 votes as against 183. Just as the session was to commence, there was heavy rain upsetting all arrangements. The delegates and visitors, however, stuck to their seats. At the appointed hour, the proceedings commenced. The president said that the task before the country must be finished through rain, flood and storm. The fight for freedom must continue under all circumstances.

Azad's presidential address was a piece of magnificent eloquence. India's fight was not against the British people but against British imperialism, he asserted. He dwelt particularly on Hindu-Muslim unity and the minority problem.

He scouted the idea that the Muslims were in a minority, and that democratic institutions in India would, therefore, jeopardize their interests and their existence: "Politically speaking, the word minority does not mean just a group that is numerically smaller and, therefore, entitled to special protection. But it means a group that is so small in number and so lacking in other qualities, that given strength it has no confidence in its own capacity to protect

itself from the much larger group that surrounds it. It is not enough that the group should be relatively the smaller, but that it should be absolutely so small as to be incapable of protecting its interests. Thus this is not merely a question of numbers; other factors also count. If the country has two major groups numbering a million and two millions respectively, it does not necessarily follow that, because one is half the other, therefore, it must call itself politically a minority and consider itself weak."

He added: "Islam has now as great a claim on the soil of India as Hinduism. If Hinduism has been the religion of the people here for several thousands of years, Islam also has been their religion for a thousand years. Just as a Hindu can say with pride that he is an Indian and follows Hinduism, so also we can say with equal pride that we are Indians and follow Islam. I shall enlarge this orbit still further. The Indian Christian is equally entitled to say with pride that he is an Indian and is following a religion of India, namely, Christianity."

"Do we, Indian Musalmans," he asked, "view the free India of the future with suspicion and distrust, or with courage and confidence? If we view it with fear and suspicion, then undoubtedly we have to follow a different path. No present declaration, no promise for the future, and no constitutional safeguards can be a remedy for our doubts and fears. We are then forced to tolerate the existence of a third power. This third power is already entrenched here and has no intention of withdrawing and if we follow this path of fear, we must needs look forward to its continuance. But if we are convinced that for us fear and doubt have no place and that we must view the future with courage and confidence in ourselves, then our course of action becomes absolutely clear. We find ourselves in a new world, which is free from the dark shadows of doubt and vacillation, inaction and apathy, and where the light of faith and determination, action and enthusiasm never fails. The confusions of the times, the ups and downs that come our way, the difficulties that beset our thorny path cannot change the direction of our steps. It becomes then our bounden duty to march with assured steps to India's national goal."

It rained throughout the night and the showers persisted in the morning of March 20. President Azad was, however, determined to go through the work of the session. Exactly at the scheduled time,

9.30 a.m., he accompanied by Gandhi, arrived at Jhanda Chowk, an open space, where 50,000 people had gathered to participate in the historic proceedings. As soon as the main resolution was passed Gandhi addressed the mammoth meeting:

"I was glad to have the opportunity of listening to the speakers who moved the amendments. The name of satyagraha was on their lips, and it reminded me of the Biblical phrase, 'Not those who say "Lord", "Lord", but those who do the will of God will find Him.' (Cheers) I do not need your cheers. I want to win your hearts and your intellects, and these cheers and acclamations stand in the way of winning them. Let me, therefore, warn you that not those who shout 'satyagraha', 'satyagraha', will do satyagraha but only those who will work for it. The essence of satyagraha is to carry out in letter and spirit the word of him whom you have chosen as your general, and to eschew the things he asks you to avoid. For, without satyagraha carried out in the proper spirit, there is no victory and no swaraj.

"I believe with some of you who said that it is our duty to shake ourselves free from slavery. But how are we to do it? Supposing a few dacoits come and take possession of our house and drive us out, it is of course our duty to fight the dacoits and get our house back from them. But how can we do this? We have to plan and to prepare for it. Therefore, when I saw you acclaiming the speaker who said that we were ready, I was shocked. For I know, that we are not yet ready. And knowing this, how can I ask you to fight? I know that with such as you, I can only have defeat. And defeat I do not want, and defeat I have never known, not even in Rajkot, whatever you may say to the contrary. The word 'defeat' is not to be found in my dictionary, and everyone who is selected as a recruit in my army may be quite sure that there is no defeat for a satyagrahi.

"One of the speakers remarked that he had no quarrel with the charkha, but he wanted the charkha to be divorced from satyagraha. Well, I tell you, as I have been telling you these twenty years, that there is vital connection between satyagraha and charkha, and the more I find that belief challenged, the more I am confirmed in it. Otherwise, I am no fool to persist in turning the charkha, day in and day out, at home and even on trains, in the teeth of medical advice. I want you too to be turning the charkha with the same

faith. And unless you do it and unless you habitually use khadi, you will deceive me and deceive the world.

"I shall, of course, die with non-violence on my lips. But you are not wedded to it in the sense I am, and so it is open to you to have another programme and to make our country free. But if you will not do this, nor turn the charkha, and want me to fight, it will be an impossible situation.

"I know that you will not fight, unless you have me with you. But then you must know that I am here, and I would fight only as a representative of those dumb millions for whom I live and for whom I want to die. My loyalty to them is greater than any other loyalty, and it is for them that I would not give up the charkha even if you were to forsake me or to kill me. For I know that, if I were to relax the conditions of the charkha, I should bring ruin upon the dumb millions for whom I have to answer before God. If, therefore, you do not believe in the charkha in the sense I believe in it, I implore you to leave me. The charkha is an outward symbol of truth and non-violence, and unless you have them in your hearts, you will not take to the charkha either. Remember, therefore, that you have to fulfil both internal and external conditions. If you fulfil the internal condition, you will cease to hate your opponent, you will not seek or work for his destruction, but pray to God to have mercy on him. Do not, therefore, concentrate on showing the misdeeds of the Government, for we have to convert and befriend those who run it. And after all, no one is wicked by nature. And if others are wicked, are we the less so? That attitude is inherent in satyagraha, and if you do not subscribe to it, even then I would ask you to leave me. For, without a belief in my programme and without an acceptance of my condition, you will ruin me, ruin yourselves and ruin the cause."

Simultaneously with the Congress was held the Anti-compromise Conference at Ramgarh. As the president of the conference, Subhas Bose observed: "What has distressed and bewildered us during the last year and a half is the fact that while on the one hand strong resolutions are passed and statements issued by the members of the Working Committee, simultaneously, other remarks are made and statements issued by Mahatma Gandhi, or by the rightist leaders, which totally create a totally different impression on the average mind. The result of all this has been that the British Government

have ceased to take the Congress seriously and have formed the impression that however much the Congressmen may talk, they will not ultimately show the fight—a determined and widespread effort is now needed."

From Sevagram, on March 25, Gandhi wrote an article entitled "Every Congress Committee a Satyagraha Committee":

"When I said at the Subjects Committee meeting at Ramgarh that every Congress committee should become a satyagraha committee, I meant every word of what I said, as I meant every word of everything else I said. I would like every Congressman who desires to serve in the satyagraha *sena* to read my two speeches made at Ramgarh as well as whatever else I may write in *Harijan* on the struggle, and to carry out the instructions meant for him or her.

"In the coming struggle, if it must come, no half-hearted loyalty will answer the purpose. Imagine a general marching to battle with doubting, ill-prepared soldiers. He will certainly march to defeat. I will not consciously make any such fatal experiment. This is not meant to frighten Congressmen. If they have the will, they will not find my instructions difficult to follow. Correspondents tell me that though they have no faith in me or in the charkha, they ply the latter for the sake of discipline. I do not understand this language. Can a general fight on the strength of the soldiers who, he knows, have no faith in him? The plain meaning of this language is that the correspondents believe in mass action but they do not believe in the connection I see between it and the charkha, etc., if the action is to be non-violent. They believe in my hold on the masses, but they do not believe in the things which I believe have given me that hold. They merely want to exploit me and will grudgingly pay the price which my ignorance or obstinacy (according to them) demands. I do not call this discipline. True discipline gives enthusiastic obedience to instructions, even though they do not satisfy the reason. A volunteer exercises his reason when he chooses his general but after having made the choice, he does not waste his time and energy in scanning every instruction and testing it on the anvil of his reason before following it. His is 'not to reason why'.

"Now for my instructions.

"Every Congress committee should become a satyagraha committee and register such Congressmen who believe in the cultivation of the spirit of goodwill towards all, who have no untouchability in

them in any shape or form, who would spin regularly, and who habitually use khadi to the exclusion of all other cloth. I would expect those who thus register their names with their committees to devote the whole of their spare time to constructive programme. If the response is sincere, these satyagraha committees would become busy spinning depots. They will work in conjunction with and under the guidance of the A.-I.S.A. branches in a business-like manner so that there remain, in the jurisdiction of the committee, no Congressmen who have not adopted khadi for exclusive use. I shall expect business-like reports to be sent from the provincial headquarters to the A.-I.C.C. as to the progress of the work of the satyagraha committees. Seeing that this registration is to be purely voluntary, the reports would mention the numbers, both of those who give their names for registration and those who do not.

"The registered satyagrahis will keep a diary of their work that they do from day to day. Their work, besides their own spinning, will consist in visiting the primary members and inducing them to use khadi, spin and register themselves. Whether they do so or not, contact should be maintained with them.

"There should be visits paid to Harijan homes and their difficulties removed so far as possible.

"Needless to say that names should be registered only of those who are willing and able to suffer imprisonment.

"No financial assistance is to be expected by satyagrahi prisoners whether for themselves or their dependents.

"So much for the active satyagrahis. But there is a much larger class of men and women who, though they will not spin or court or suffer imprisonment, believe in the two cardinal principles of satyagraha and welcome and wish well to the struggle. These I will call the passive satyagrahis. They will help equally with the active satyagrahis, if they will not interfere with the course of the struggle by themselves courting imprisonment or aiding or precipitating the strikes of labourers or students. Those who out of overzeal, or for any other cause, will act contrary to the instructions will harm the struggle and may even compel me to suspend it. When the forces of violence are let loose all over the world and when the nations reputed to be most civilized cannot think of any force other than that, it will be possible to say of India that she fought and won the battle of freedom by purely peaceful means.

"I am quite clear in my mind that, given the co-operation of politically-minded India, the attainment of India's freedom is perfectly possible through unmixed non-violence. The world does not believe our pretension of non-violence. Let alone the world—I, the self-styled general, have repeatedly admitted that we have violence in our hearts, that we are often violent to one another in our mutual dealings. I must confess that I will not be able to fight, so long as we have violence in our midst. But I will fight, if the proposed register is honest and if those who courageously keep out will not disturb the even course of the struggle.

"Non-violent action means mobilization of the world opinion in our favour. I know that a growing number of thinking men and women of the world are sick of the war spirit, they are longing for a way of peace, and they are looking to India to point that way. We cannot have that opinion on our side, if we are not honestly non-violent. And let me repeat what I have said in these columns that I shall be able to fight with a very small army of honest satyagrahis and shall feel powerless and embarrassed if I have a huge army in which I can have no trust or as to whose behaviour I am not always sure.

"I expect the A.-I.C.C. to organize satyagraha committees and report to me from time to time of the progress made. If there is an enthusiastic response, inside of one month, it should be possible to forecast the exact period required to put the satyagraha committees in working order."

Not Yet

1940

AT THE end of March 1940, the Muslim League session was held at Lahore, where the League adopted Pakistan as its creed.

In his presidential address, Jinnah harped on two-nation theory: "Islam and Hinduism are not religions in the strict sense of the word, but are, in fact, different and distinct social orders, and it is only a dream that the Hindus and the Muslims can ever evolve a common nationality." To Jinnah, the present unity of India was "artificial", dating only from the British period and maintained by the British bayonet. He declared that democracy was unsuited to India and that "the Muslims are a nation, according to any definition of a nation and they must have their homelands, their territory and their state."

Under the guidance of Jinnah, the Muslim League passed the Pakistan resolution: "Resolved that it is the considered view of this session of the All-India Muslim League that no constitutional plan would be workable in this country or be acceptable to the Muslims unless it is designed on the following basic principles, namely, that geographically contiguous units are demarcated into regions which should be so constituted with such territorial re-adjustments as may be necessary that the areas in which the Muslims are numerically in a majority as in the north-western and the eastern zones of India should be grouped to constitute 'independent states', in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign."

In April, there gathered in Delhi representatives of the various Muslim nationalist parties—the Congress Muslims, Ahrars, Jamiat-e-Ulema-e-Hind, Shia Political Conference—virtually all Muslim groups except the League and the Khaksars. Allah Baksh, Premier of Sind, presided over the Azad Muslim Conference. The delegates came to protest against the Pakistan idea, and against the use made of the Muslims by the British Government and others as an excuse

for political inaction. They strongly supported the Congress plan for the constituent assembly and passed a resolution condemning the demand for the partition put forward by the Muslim League: "India, with her geographical and political boundaries is an indivisible whole. All the nooks and corners of the country contain the hearths and homes of the Muslims, and the cherished historic monuments of their religion and culture, which are dearer to them than their lives. From the national point of view, every Muslim is an Indian." The conference declared Muslim determination to fight shoulder to shoulder with their other countrymen for the attainment of complete independence.

The Pakistan resolution of the League was commented upon by Gandhi in an article entitled "A Baffling Situation":

"A question has been put to me: 'Do you intend to start general civil disobedience although Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah has declared war against the Hindus and has got the Muslim League to pass a resolution favouring the vivisection of India into two? If you do, then what becomes of your formula that there is no swaraj without communal unity?'

"I admit that the step taken by the Muslim League at Lahore creates a baffling situation. But I do not regard it so baffling, as to make civil disobedience an impossibility. Supposing that the Congress is reduced to a hopeless minority, it will still be open to it, and indeed it may be its duty, to resort to civil disobedience. The struggle will not be against the majority, but it will be against the foreign ruler. If the struggle succeeds, the fruits thereof will be reaped as well by the Congress as by the opposing majority. Let me, however, say in parenthesis that until the conditions I have mentioned for the starting of civil disobedience are fulfilled, civil disobedience cannot be started in any case. In the present instance there is nothing to prevent the imperial rulers from declaring their will in unequivocal terms that henceforth India will govern herself according to her own will, not that of the rulers as has happened hitherto. Neither the Muslim League nor any other party can oppose such a declaration. For the Muslims will be entitled to dictate their own terms. Unless the rest of India wishes to engage in internal fratricide, the others will have to submit to the Muslim dictation, if the Muslims will resort to it. I know no non-violent method of compelling the obedience of eight crores of Muslims to the will of the

rest of India, however powerful a majority the rest may represent. The Muslims must have the same right of self-determination that the rest of India has. We are at present, a joint family. Any member may claim a division.

"Thus, so far as I am concerned, my proposition that there is no swaraj without communal unity holds as good today, as when I first enunciated it in 1919.

"But civil disobedience stands on a different footing. It is open even to one single person to offer civil disobedience, if he feels the call. It will not be offered by the Congress alone or for any particular group. Whatever benefit accrues from it will belong to the whole of India. And the injury, if there is any, will belong only to the civil disobedience party.

"But I do not believe that Muslims, when it comes to a matter of actual decision, will ever want vivisection. Their good sense will prevent them. Their self-interest will deter them. Their religion will forbid the obvious suicide, which the partition would mean. The 'two nations' theory is an untruth. The vast majority of Muslims of India are converts to Islam or are the descendants of converts. They did not become a separate nation, as soon as they became converts. A Bengali Muslim speaks the same tongue that a Bengali Hindu does, eats the same food and has the same amusements as his Hindu neighbour. They dress alike. I have often found it difficult to distinguish by outward sign, between a Bengali Hindu and a Bengali Muslim. The same phenomenon is observable more or less in the south among the poor, who constitute the masses of India. When I first met the late Sir Ali Imam, I did not know that he was not a Hindu. His speech, his dress, his manners, his food were the same as of the majority of the Hindus in whose midst I found him. His name alone betrayed him. Not even that with Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah. For his name could be that of any Hindu. When I first met him, I did not know that he was a Muslim. I came to know his religion, when I had his full name given to me. His nationality was written in his face and his manner. The reader will be surprised to know that for days, if not months, I used to think of the late Vithalbhai Patel as a Muslim, as he used to sport a beard and a Turkish cap. The Hindu law of inheritance governs many Muslim groups. Sir Mahomed Iqbal used to speak with pride of his Brahminical descent. Iqbal and Kitchlew are names common to Hindus and

Muslims. Hindus and Muslims of India are not two nations. Those whom God has made one, man will never be able to divide.

"And is Islam such an exclusive religion as Qaid-e-Azam would have it? Is there nothing in common between Islam and Hinduism or any other religion? Or is Islam merely an enemy of Hinduism? Were the Ali brothers and their associates wrong when they hugged the Hindus as blood brothers, and saw so much in common between the two? I am not now thinking of individual Hindus who may have disillusioned the Muslim friends. Qaid-e-Azam has, however, raised a fundamental issue. This is his thesis: 'It is extremely difficult to appreciate why our Hindu friends fail to understand the real nature of Islam and of Hinduism. They are not religions in the strict sense of the word, but are, in fact, different and distinct social orders, and it is a dream that the Hindus and Muslims can ever evolve a common nationality. This misconception of one Indian nation has gone far beyond the limits and is the cause of most of our troubles and will lead India to destruction, if we fail to revise our notions in time. The Hindus and Muslims have two different religious philosophies, social customs and literatures. They neither intermarry, nor inter-dine together, and indeed, they belong to two different civilizations which are based mainly on conflicting ideas and conceptions. Their aspects on life and of life are different. It is quite clear that Hindus and Muslims derive inspiration from different sources of history. They have different episodes. Very often the hero of one is a foe of the other and, likewise, their victories and defeats overlap. To yoke together two such nations under a single state, one as a numerical minority and the other as majority, must lead to growing discontent and final destruction of any fabric that may be so built up for the government of such a state.'

"He does not say some Hindus are bad; he says Hindus as such have nothing in common with the Muslims. I make bold to say that he and those who think like him are rendering no service to Islam. They are misinterpreting the message inherent in the very word Islam. I say this because I feel deeply hurt over what is now going on in the name of the Muslim League. I should be failing in my duty, if I did not warn the Muslims of India against the untruth that is being propagated amongst them. This warning is a duty because I have faithfully served them in their hour of need and because Hindu-Muslim unity has been and is my life's mission."

Gandhi explained his own position further in the following issue of *Harijan*:

"Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan has, in his criticism of my reply to Qaid-e-Azam, put some questions which I gladly answer. I must adhere to my statement that I have never spoken to anybody on the communal question as a Hindu. I have no authority. Whenever I have spoken to anybody, I have spoken as a Congressman, but often only as an individual. No Congressman, not even the Congress President, can always speak as a representative. Big things have always been transacted on this planet by persons belonging to different organizations coming together and talking informally in their non-representative capacity. I fear that even the answer I am about to give must be taken as representing nobody but myself. In the present instance, I have reason to say that probably I do not represent any single member of the Working Committee. I am answering as a peacemaker, as a friend—and may I say, brother—of the Musalmans.

"As a man of non-violence, I cannot forcibly resist the proposed partition if the Muslims of India really insist upon it. But I never can be a willing party to the vivisection. I would employ every non-violent means to prevent it. For it means the undoing of centuries of work done by numberless Hindus and Muslims to live together as one nation. Partition means a patent untruth. My whole soul rebels against the idea that Hinduism and Islam represent two antagonistic cultures and doctrines. To assent to such a doctrine is for me the denial of God. For I believe with my whole soul, that the God of the Koran is also the God of the Gita, and that we are all, no matter by what name designated, children of the same God. I must rebel against the idea that millions of Indians who were Hindus the other day changed their nationality on adopting Islam as their religion.

"But that is my belief. I cannot thrust it down the throats of the Muslims who think that they are a different nation. I refuse, however, to believe that the eight crores of Muslims will say that they have nothing in common with their Hindu and other brethren. Their mind can only be known by a referendum made to them duly on that clear issue. The contemplated constituent assembly can easily decide the question. Naturally on an issue such as this, there can be no arbitration. It is purely a matter of self-determination.

I know of no other conclusive method of ascertaining the mind of the eight crores of Muslims.

"But the contemplated constituent assembly will have the framing of a constitution as its main function. It cannot do this, until the communal question is settled.

"I still believe that there can be no swaraj by non-violent means without communal unity. And eight crores of Muslims can certainly bar the way to peaceful freedom.

"If then I still talk of civil disobedience, it is because I believe that the Muslim masses want freedom as much as the rest of the population of this country. And assuming that they do not, civil disobedience will be a powerful means of educating public opinion whether Muslim, Hindu or any other. It will also be an education of world opinion. But I will not embark upon it, unless I am, as far as is humanly possible, sure that non-violence will be observed both in spirit and in the letter. I hope that the Nawabzada has no difficulty in believing that whatever is gained by civil disobedience will be gained for all. When India gets the power to frame her own constitution, the Muslims will surely have a decisive voice in shaping their own future. It will not be, cannot be, decided by the vote of the majority.

"Lastly, I suggest to the Nawabzada that he wrote in haste, suggesting that 'the sole objective of the Congress under Mr. Gandhi's fostering care has been the revival of Hinduism and the imposition of the Hindu culture on all and sundry'. My own objective is not the issue in the terrible indictment. The objective of the Congress is wholly political. Nothing is to be gained by making statements that are incapable of proof. So far as my own objective is concerned, my life is an open book. I claim to represent all the cultures, for my religion, whatever it may be called, demands the fulfilment of all cultures. I am at home wherever I go, for I regard all religions with the same respect as my own."

"Are you right," asked a correspondent, "in conceding the right of self-determination to the Muslims in matter so vitally affecting others also, namely Hindus, Sikhs, etc.? Supposing the majority of the Muslims decide in favour of partition in terms of the Muslim League resolution, what happens to the self-determination of Hindus, Sikhs, etc., who will be minorities in the Muslim states? If you go on like this, where will be the end of it?"

"Of course, Hindus and Sikhs will have the same right," Gandhi said. "I have simply said that there is no other non-violent method of dealing with the problem. If every component part of the nation claims the right of self-determination for itself, there is no one nation and there is no independence. I have said that Pakistan is such an untruth that it cannot stand. As soon as the authors begin to work it out, they will find that it is not practicable."

To a British critic, Gandhi replied: "The British can retain their hold on India only by a policy of 'divide and rule'. A living unity between the Muslims and Hindus is fraught with danger to their rule. It would mean an end of it. Therefore, it seems to me that a true solution will come with the end of the rule, potentially, if not in fact. What can be done under the threat of Pakistan? If it is not a threat but a desirable goal, why should it be prevented? If it is undesirable and is meant only for the Muslims to get more under its shadow, any solution would be an unjust solution. It would be worse than no solution. I, therefore, am entirely for waiting till the menace is gone. India's independence is a living thing. No make-believe will suit. The whole world is in the throes of a new birth. Anything done for a temporary gain would be tantamount to an abortion.

"I cannot think in terms of narrow Hinduism or narrow Islam. I am wholly uninterested in a patchwork solution. India is a big country, a big nation composed of different cultures, which are tending to blend with one another, each complementing the rest. If I must wait for the completion of the process, I must wait. It may not be completed in my day. I shall love to die in the faith that it must come in the fullness of time. I should be happy to think that I had done nothing to hamper the process. Subject to this condition, I would do anything to bring about harmony. My life is made up of compromises, but they have been compromises that have brought me nearer the goal. Pakistan cannot be worse than the foreign domination. I have lived under the latter, though not willingly. If God so desires it, I may have to become a helpless witness to the undoing of my dream. But I do not believe that the Muslims really want to dismember India."

A Chinese visitor to Sevagram had many questions to ask. "Do you believe that the British, knowing them as you do, will give you independence without a fight?" he commenced.

"It all depends," said Gandhi. "I do not think they would want to have a fight, if they were conscious of our strength. But, today, they do not feel our strength."

"Have you any means other than civil disobedience to enforce your will?"

"Yes. If we had no internecine quarrels, the British Government would not be able to resist us."

"You are aware, that in China, we have paid heavily for unity. We have had to suffer twenty-five years of civil war. Might not India have to suffer the same horrors if the British withdrew?"

"It is impossible to say definitely what will happen. It is, however, not necessary that there should be internal war. I imagine conditions in China were different. The whole populace was fired with the spirit of revolt. Here, we, in our 700,000 villages, do not fly at each other's throats. There are no sharp divisions between us. But non-violence, applied to large masses of mankind, is a new experiment in the history of the world. I am buoyed up by my faith in its efficacy. The millions may not have caught that faith, and it may be that civil war will be the price we have to pay for our liberty. But if we win truly non-violently against the British, I am sure there will be no civil war."

"After twenty-five years of civil war in China, we have found one person to represent us in our Generalissimo. Is it not possible that the Indian people will need someone more martial than you with your spiritual leadership?"

"If there is a civil war, it will have proved my bankruptcy. A militarist will then be the need."

"Would you receive the help of a third party to free you from your yoke?"

"No. We have to find ourselves through our own inner strength, otherwise we must fall. Any structure built with outside help must of necessity be weak."

"The British are a bargaining nation, are they not? Have you anything with which to bargain with them?"

"Very little," replied Gandhi. "In any case I would not bargain for my liberty."

On April 5, Gandhi lost in the death of Andrews a dear English friend. "Charlie Andrews," wrote Gandhi, "was one of the greatest and best Englishmen. And because he was a good son of England,

he became also a son of India. When we met in South Africa, we simply met as brothers, and remained as such to the end. There was no distance between us. It was not a friendship between an Englishman and an Indian. It was an unbreakable bond between two seekers and servants. I want Englishmen and Indians, whilst the memory of the death of this servant of England and India is still fresh, to give a thought to the legacy he has left for us both. He said on his bed from which he was never to rise, 'Mohan, swaraj is coming!' Both Englishmen and Indians can make swaraj come. It is possible, quite possible, for the best Englishmen and the best Indians to meet together and never to separate, until they have evolved a formula acceptable to both. The legacy left by Andrews is worth the effort. That is the thought that rules me, whilst I contemplate the benign face of Andrews and what innumerable deeds of love he performed so that India may take her independent place among the nations of the earth."

In the middle of April, the Working Committee met at Wardha to consider the situation in the country as it had developed since the Ramgarh Congress, and the necessity for preparing the people for satyagraha which seemed inevitable. The arrest of the leftists including that of Jayaprakash Narayan was a clear indication of the Government intention to forestall any movement. Commenting on the proceedings at the committee meeting, Gandhi wrote:

"The Working Committee advisedly passed no startling or new resolution this time. For, there was no programme before the committee. That of civil disobedience has to be evolved by me. But the committee had useful discussions on many points, arising out of the contemplated movement. I propose to give the readers the gist of what I told the members of the committee, with the necessary amplification.

"Civil disobedience in the face of the lawlessness that prevails in the country will easily pass for the same, unless it is recognized beyond doubt as something different in kind from the prevailing brand. Thus the Khaksar defiance is admittedly and openly violent. The kisans who held up the train between Gaya and Kiul were violent under the cover of non-violence. They were doubly guilty according to the non-violent conception. For, they are supposed to be Congressmen. To hold up a train is disobedience without doubt. And so far as the Congress is concerned, according to the Ramgarh

resolution, the Congressmen may not resort to civil disobedience singly or in groups, without my permission. I have already said that Professor Ranga's disobedience was also not civil.

"Now civil disobedience, if it is really civil, must appear so even to the opponent. He must feel that the resistance is not intended to do him any harm. At the present moment, the average Englishman thinks that our non-violence is merely a cloak. The Muslim Leaguers think that civil disobedience is aimed at them more than at the British. I protest with all the strength at my command that, so far as I am concerned, I have no desire whatsoever to embarrass the British, especially at a time, when it is a question of life and death with them. All that I want the Congress to do through civil disobedience is to deny the British Government the moral influence which the Congress co-operation would give. The material resources of India and her man-power are already being exploited by the British Government, by reason of their control of whole of this sub-continent.

"If by civil disobedience the Congress has no desire to embarrass the British people, it has still less to embarrass the Muslim League. And I can say this on behalf of the Congress with far greater assurance than I can with regard to the British. Working in the midst of suspicion and terrible misrepresentation on the one hand, and the prevailing lawlessness outside and inside the Congress on the other, I have to think a thousand times before embarking on civil disobedience.

"So far as I can see at present, mass civil disobedience is most unlikely. The choice lies between individual civil disobedience on a large scale, very restricted, or confined only to me. In every case, there must be the backing of the whole of the official Congress organization and of the millions who, though not on the Congress register, have always supported the organization with their mute but most effective co-operation. The most effective and visible co-operation which all the Congressmen and the mute millions can show is by not interfering with the course that civil disobedience may take and by themselves spinning and using khadi to the exclusion of all other cloth. If it is allowed that there is a meaning in people wearing primroses on the Primrose Day, surely there is much more in a people using a particular kind of cloth and giving a particular kind of labour to the cause they hold dear. From their compliance with

the khadi test, I shall infer that they have shed untouchability and have nothing but brotherly feeling towards all without distinction of race, colour or creed. Those who will do this are as much satyagrahis, as those who will be singled out for civil disobedience."

"Both Professor Ranga and Shri Jayaprakash Narayan," wrote a correspondent, "have been punished under the law. But while you were moved by the latter's sentence, you have denounced Professor Ranga." Gandhi said: "There is no room in public life for partial friendships. Real friendship is in no need of partiality. I have none for Shri Jayaprakash. Nor have I any antipathy towards Professor Ranga. I have perhaps less differences with Professor Ranga than with Shri Jayaprakash, but that makes no difference to me. Shri Jayaprakash committed no breach of order. He delivered a speech which was regarded as contrary to law. In Professor Ranga's case, there was a deliberate breach of an ordei served on him. The two things are different. I have answered your question, because I attach importance to the breach. I also want to warn those who accept the Congress discipline against such breaches."

Incidentally, Gandhi revealed his agreement with Jayaprakash's views on socialism: "As an ideal to be reduced to practice, as soon as possible, after India comes into her own." "I have claimed," he said, "that I was a socialist long before those I know in India had avowed their creed. But my socialism was natural to me and not adopted from any books. It came out of my unshakable belief in non-violence. No man could be actively non-violent and not rise against social injustice, no matter where it occurred. Unfortunately western socialists have, so far as I know, believed in the necessity of violence for enforcing socialistic doctrines.

"I have always held that social justice, even unto the least and the lowliest, is impossible of attainment by force. I have believed that it is possible by proper training of the lowliest by non-violent means to secure the redress of the wrongs suffered by them. That means is non-violent non-co-operation. At times, non-co-operation becomes as much a duty as co-operation. No one is bound to co-operate in one's own undoing or slavery. Freedom received through the effort of others, however benevolent, cannot be retained when such effort is withdrawn. In other words, such freedom is not real freedom. But the lowliest can feel its glow, as soon as they learn the art of attaining it through non-violent non-co-operation."

In the scorching sun of April, an American journalist trekked to Sevagram for an interview with Gandhi which was in the form of questions and answers.

Question: "You must have seen in your lifetime more devastation by war than there has been at any time in the world's history. And yet do you still believe in non-violence as the basis of a new civilization? Are you satisfied that your own countrymen accept it without any reservation? You continue to harp on your conditions being fulfilled before starting civil disobedience. Do you still hold to them?"

Answer: "You are right in pointing out that there is unheard-of devastation going on in the world. But that is the real moment for testing my faith in non-violence. Surprising as it may appear to some of my critics, my faith in non-violence remains absolutely undimmed. Of course, non-violence may not come in my lifetime in the measure I would like to see it come, but that is a different matter. It cannot shake my faith, and that is why I have become unbending, so far as the fulfilment of my conditions prior to the starting of civil disobedience is concerned; because, at the risk of being the laughing-stock of the whole world, I adhere to my belief that there is an unbreakable connection between the spinning wheel and non-violence, so far as India is concerned. Just as there are signs by which you can recognize violence with the naked eye, so is the spinning wheel to me a decisive sign of non-violence. But, nothing can deter me from working away in hope. I have no other method for solving the many baffling problems that face India."

"Why do you say that democracy can only be saved through non-violence?" asked the American.

Gandhi replied: "Because, democracy, so long as it is sustained by violence, cannot provide for or protect the weak. My notion of democracy is that under it the weakest should have the same opportunity as the strongest. That can never happen except through non-violence. No country in the world today shows any but patronizing regard for the weak. The weakest, you say, go to the wall. Take your own case. Your land is owned by a few capitalist owners. The same is true of South Africa. These large holdings cannot be sustained except by violence, veiled if not open. The western democracy as it functions today is diluted Nazism or fascism. At best it is merely a cloak to hide the Nazi and the fascist tendencies of

imperialism. Why is there the war today, if it is not for the satisfaction of the desire to share the spoils? It was not through democratic methods that Britain bagged India. What is the meaning of South African democracy? Its very constitution has been drawn to protect the white man against the coloured man, the natural occupant. Your own history is perhaps blacker still, in spite of what the northern states did for the abolition of slavery. The way you have treated the Negro, presents a discreditable record. And it is to save such democracies that the war is being fought! There is something very hypocritical about it. I am thinking just now in terms of non-violence and am trying to expose violence in its nakedness. Your wars will never ensure safety for democracy. India's experiment can and will, if the people come up to the mark or, to put it another way, if God gives me the necessary wisdom and strength to bring the experiment to fruition."

In April, the blitzkrieg broke on Norway and Denmark. "Of what avail is our non-violence to Norway, Sweden and Denmark," asked a correspondent. "True, we are doing nothing beyond embarrassing Britain, and perhaps we may say that such an embarrassment is inevitable and is not caused deliberately. But the fact remains that England is in distress and by our action we are embarrassing not only England, but other good nations who have been victims of aggression. We are not likely to succeed in changing England's heart. You have never regretted your action during the last war. This time your attitude appears to be in sharp contrast, although you say that both attitudes are right."

"My correspondent," wrote Gandhi, "is not alone in bemoaning the lot of the most cultured and inoffensive people like the Danes and the Norwegians. This war is showing the futility of violence. Supposing Herr Hitler becomes victorious over the allies, he will never subjugate England and France. It will mean another war. Supposing the allies are victorious, the world will fare no better. They will be more polite but not less ruthless, unless they learn the lesson of non-violence during the war and unless they shed the gains they have made through violence. The first condition of non-violence is justice all round in every department of life. Perhaps, it is too much to expect of human nature. I do not, however, think so. No one should dogmatize about the capacity of human nature for degradation or exaltation.

"The Indian non-violence has brought no relief to the cultured western powers, because it is still poor stuff. Why travel so far to see its efficacy? We in India are torn asunder, in spite of the Congress policy of non-violence. The Congress itself is distrusted. Not until the Congress or a similar group of people represents the non-violence of the strong will the world catch the infection.

"India's aid to Spain and China was merely moral. The material aid was but an insignificant token of it. There is hardly an Indian who does not feel the same sympathy for Norway and Denmark who lost their freedom overnight. Pauper India has nothing to send to these countries except her non-violence. But as I have said, this is not yet a sendable commodity. It will be, when India has gained her freedom through non-violence.

"There then remains Britain's case. The Congress has caused no embarrassment. I have declared already that I shall do nothing to embarrass Britain. Britain will be embarrassed, if there is anarchy in India. That, the Congress, so long as it is under my discipline, will not support.

"But what the Congress cannot do is to lend its moral influence to Britain. Moral influence is never mechanically given. It is for Britain to take it. Perhaps, the British statesmen do not think the Congress has any to lend. Perhaps, they think that all they need is material aid in this warring world. If they do, they will not be far wrong. Morality is contraband in war. My correspondent has given up the whole of his case for Britain when he says, 'We are not likely to succeed in changing Britain's heart.' I do not wish ill to Britain. I shall grieve, if she goes down. But the moral influence of the Congress cannot avail Britain, unless she washes her hands clean of India. It works under its own unalterable condition.

"My friend does not see the difference between my recruiting in Kheda and my attitude now. During the last war, the moral issue had not been raised. The Congress was not pledged to non-violence. The Congress had not the moral hold on the masses, it now enjoys. I was acting on my own in all I did. I had even attended the war conference. And to be true to my declaration, I had been recruiting at the cost of my health. I told the people that, if they wanted arms, military service was the surest way to get them. But if they were non-violent like me, my appeal was not to them. There was no non-violent man among my audiences, so far as I know.

Their reluctance was based on ill will towards Britain. This was gradually giving place to an enlightened determination to throw off the foreign yoke.

"Things have changed since then. In spite of the unanimous support that Great Britain got during the last war from India, the British attitude was translated into the Rowlatt Act and the like. The Congress accepted non-violent non-co-operation to meet the British menace. There is the memory of the Jallianwala Bagh, the Simon Commission, the Round Table Conference and the emasculation of Bengal for the sake of the misdeeds of a few. The Congress having accepted non-violence, I do not need to go to the people to give the recruits. Through the Congress, I can give something infinitely better than a few such recruits. Of that, evidently Great Britain has no need. I am willing but helpless."

In reply to other correspondents requesting him not to embarrass Britain, Gandhi said:

"These letters ignore British nature. British people stand in no need of sympathy from subject people. For, they can command all they want from them. They are a brave and proud people. They are not going to be demoralized by even half a dozen such setbacks. They are well able to cope with any difficulty that may face them. India has no say whatsoever in the manner in which she is to take her part in the war. She was dragged into the war by the mere wish of the British Cabinet. Her resources are being utilized at the will of the British Cabinet. India is a dependency, and Britain will drain the dependency dry, as she has done in the past. What gesture has the Congress to make in these circumstances? The greatest gesture in its power, the Congress is already making. It creates no trouble in the country. It refrains in pursuance of its own policy. I have said and I repeat that I shall do nothing wilfully to embarrass Britain. It will be contrary to my conception of satyagraha. Beyond this, it is not in the power of the Congress to go.

"Indeed, it is the duty of the Congress to prosecute its demand for independence and to continue the preparations for civil disobedience to the fullest extent it can. The nature of the preparations should be appreciated. To promote khadi and village industries, communal unity, removal of untouchability, prohibition, and to this end to enlist and train the Congress members. Is this preparation to be suspended? I dare say that, if the Congress truly becomes

non-violent and, in pursuance of the policy of non-violence, it successfully carries out the constructive work I have mentioned, it will be able to have independence without doubt. Then will be the time for India as an independent nation to decide what aid she should give to Britain and how.

"The Congress contribution to the cause of the allies in so far as it may be good, and to the world peace, is its active pursuance of non-violence and truth and the prosecution of its goal of Complete Independence, without abatement and without delay.

"Britain is really damaging her own cause by persistently refusing to examine the Congress position and recognize its justice and in raising false issues. The constituent assembly of the kind proposed by me provides for every difficulty except one, if it is a difficulty. It does not provide for British interference in the shaping of India's destiny. If that is put forth as a difficulty, the Congress must wait, till it is acknowledged that it is not only no difficulty and that self-determination is India's indisputable right."

On the other hand, Lohia and other socialist leaders were pleading for immediate civil disobedience. "Not yet," asserted Gandhi. "If Dr. Lohia subscribes to my conception of the working of non-violence, he will at once admit that the present is no atmosphere for influencing the Britisher in the right direction through civil disobedience. If I start now, the whole purpose of civil disobedience will be defeated.

"I would unhesitatingly declare civil disobedience, if the country was demonstrably non-violent and disciplined. But unfortunately, we have many groups outside the Congress, who believe in neither non-violence nor civil disobedience. In the Congress itself, there are all shades of opinion about the efficacy of non-violence. Congressmen who believe in the application of non-violence for the defence of India can be counted on the finger-tips. Though we have made great strides towards non-violence, we have not arrived at a stage when we can hope to be unconquerable. Any false step at present may end in the loss of the great moral prestige that the Congress has gained. We have sufficiently demonstrated that the Congress has done with imperialism, and that it will not be satisfied with anything less than the unfettered right of self-determination.

"If the British Government will not *suo motu* declare India as a free country having the right to determine her own status and her

constitution, I am of the opinion that we should wait till the heat of the battle in the heart of the allied countries subsides and the future is clearer than it is. We do not seek our independence out of Britain's ruin. That is not the way of non-violence.

"But, we shall have many opportunities of demonstrating our power if we really have it. We can make it felt at the time of peace which must come whichever party wins.

"Have we got the power? Is India at ease without having up-to-date arms? Does not India feel helpless without the ability to defend herself against aggression? Do even Congressmen feel secure? Or do they not feel that for some years to come at any rate India will have to be helped by Britain or some other power? If such is our unfortunate plight, how can we hope to make an effective contribution towards an honourable peace after the war or universal disarmament? We must first demonstrate the efficacy of the non-violence of the strong in our own country, before we can expect to influence the tremendously armed powers of the West.

"But many Congressmen are playing at non-violence. They think in terms of civil disobedience anyhow, meaning the filling of jails. This is a childish interpretation of the great force that civil disobedience is. I must continue to repeat, even though it may cause nausea, that jail-going without the backing of honest constructive effort and goodwill in the heart for the wrongdoer is violence and, therefore, forbidden in satyagraha. Force generated by non-violence is infinitely greater than the force of all the arms invented by man's ingenuity. Non-violence, therefore, is the decisive factor in civil disobedience. At this the most critical moment in India's history, I will not play with the force whose hidden possibilities I have been humbly trying to explore now for nearly half a century. Fortunately in the last resort I have myself to fall back upon. I have been told that people cannot be non-violent overnight. I have never contended they can. But I have held that by proper training they can be, if they have the will. Active non-violence is necessary for those who will offer civil disobedience, but the will and proper training are enough for the people to co-operate with those who are chosen for civil disobedience. The constructive work prescribed by the Congress is the proper training. Given the preparation, the Congress will make perhaps the most effective contribution toward ending the war in the right way. The disarmament of India though compulsory

in origin, if it is voluntarily adopted by the nation as a virtue and if India makes a declaration that she will not defend herself with the arms, can materially influence the European situation. Those, therefore, who wish to see India realize her destiny through non-violence, should devote every ounce of their energy towards the fulfilment of the constructive programme in right earnest without any thought of civil disobedience."

In May, Great Britain received a definite setback in Norway. Germany launched an invasion of Holland, Belgium and Luxembourg. Churchill replaced Chamberlain as the Prime Minister, and Mr. Leopold Amery succeeded Lord Zetland as the Secretary of State for India.

Answering in the House of Commons the first question put to him as Secretary of State, Mr. Amery declared on May 23 that India's attainment of free and equal partnership in the Commonwealth was the goal of the British policy. The promised reconsideration of the constitution implied, he pointed out, discussion, not dictation, and the Government were anxious to do all they could to promote an agreement among the Indians as to the shape it should take. Interviewed on Mr. Amery's statement, Gandhi stated:

"While the hourly butchery is going on in the West and peaceful homes are being destroyed, I have no heart to say anything publicly in regard to Mr. Amery's statement. I will leave no stone unturned to bring about a peaceful and honourable settlement of the present deadlock."

The British reverses created uneasiness in India. A correspondent wrote, "You sitting in Sevagram can have no idea of the talks and whispers going on in the busy cities. Panic has seized them."

"Panic is the most demoralizing state anyone can be in," replied Gandhi. "There never is any cause for panic. One must keep heart whatever happens. War is an unmitigated evil. But war certainly does one good thing, it drives away fear and it brings bravery to the surface. Several million lives must have been already lost between the allies and the Germans. They have been wasting blood like water. Old men, women, both old and young, and children in Britain and France are living in the midst of imminent death. But there is no panic there. If they were seized by panic, it would be an enemy more dreadful than German bullets, bombs and poison gas. Let us learn from these suffering nations of the West, and banish

panic from our midst. And in India there is no cause whatsoever for panic. Britain will die hard and heroically even if she has to. We may hear of reverses, but we will not hear of demoralization. Whatever happens will happen in an orderly manner.

"Therefore, I would say to those who lend a listening ear to me: Go on with your work or business in the usual way. Do not withdraw your deposits or make haste to turn your paper into cash. If you are cautious, you will run no new risks. Your metal buried underground or in your treasure chests need not be considered safer than in banks or in paper, if anarchy overtakes us. There is risk just now in everything. It is best to be as you are in such a condition. Your steadiness, if it is multiplied, will steady the market. It will be the best preventive against anarchy. There undoubtedly is fear of goondaism in such times. You must be prepared to cope with it yourself. Goondas flourish only in the midst of timid people. They will have no quarter from the people who can defend themselves violently or non-violently. Non-violent defence presupposes recklessness about one's life and property. If it is persisted in, it will in the end be a sure cure for goondaism. But non-violence cannot be learnt in a day. It requires practice. You can commence to learn it from now. You must be ready to lose your life or property, or both. But that is implied in the art of non-violence. If you do not know how to defend yourself either way, the Government will not be able to save you in spite of its best effort. And no government, however powerful it may be, can without the active co-operation of the people. If even God only helps those who will help themselves, how much more true it must be of perishable governments! Do not lose your nerve and think that tomorrow there will be no government and it will be all anarchy. You can be the government now and you certainly will be in the contingency you contemplate, or you will perish."

"People believe in your sincerity" wrote one critic "when you sympathized with Britain and France in their struggle for existence, but some of us have scented a danger that the Indian capitalists may continue to employ you as a tool for keeping India calm, when these capitalists are reaping rich profit as a result of this war. What steps are you taking to remove this suspicion?"

"I propose to take no steps," said Gandhi, "even as I took none when I was accused of having one crore of rupees in the Bank of

England. Lies are best left unanswered. They die of inanition. They have no vitality of their own. They flourish on opposition. If my whole life is not sufficient answer to the lie referred to by you, no steps that I can take will remove the impression created by the lie. Mind you, I do not dispute the fact that the peaceful atmosphere created by my inaction benefits the capitalists, but it benefits the masses more than the capitalists, for inaction enables the masses to garner their non-violent strength which will enable them to deal effectively with capitalists and imperialism which covers them."

On June 15, Gandhi published an article entitled "Two Parties" in which he repudiated the idea of an inter-party agreement: "The public and private appeals are being made to me to call all parties together and arrive at a common agreement, and then, they say, we shall get what we want from Great Britain. These friends forget one central fact. The Congress, which professes to speak for India and wants unadulterated independence, cannot strike a common measure of agreement with those who do not.

"Thus for the present purpose, there are only two parties—the Congress and those who side with the Congress and the other parties who do not. Between the two, there is no meeting-ground without the one or the other surrendering its purpose . . . An agreement independently of evolving a common demand the Congress must seek and has always sought. It has to woo all parties, disarm suspicion and create trust in its bona fides."

To Every Briton

1940

ON JUNE 17, 1940, France sued for peace. The next day, Gandhi wrote on, "How to combat Hitlerism?":

"Whatever Herr Hitler may ultimately prove to be, we know what Hitlerism has come to mean. It means naked ruthless force reduced to an exact science and worked with scientific precision. In its effect, it becomes almost irresistible.

"In the early days of satyagraha, when it was still known as passive resistance, the *Star* of Johannesburg, stirred by the sight of a handful of Indians, wholly unarmed and incapable of organized violence even if they wished it, pitting themselves against an overwhelmingly armed Government, had a cartoon in which the latter was depicted as a steam-roller representing an irresistible force, and passive resistance was depicted as an elephant unmoved and comfortably planting himself in his seat. This was marked immovable force. The cartoonist had a true insight into the duel between the irresistible and the immovable forces. It was then a stalemate. The sequel we all know. What was depicted and appeared to be irresistible was successfully resisted by the immovable force of satyagraha, call it suffering without retaliation.

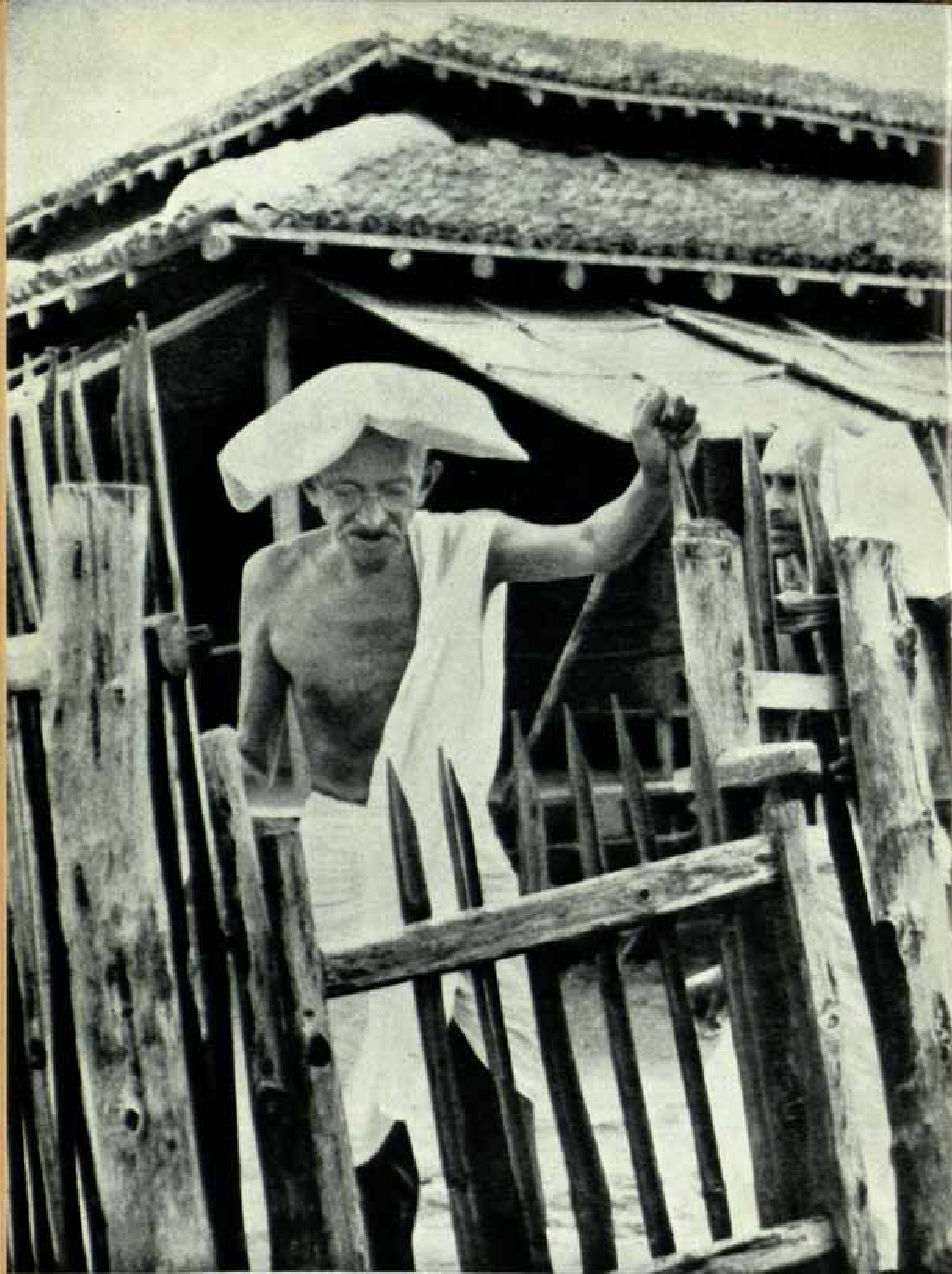
"And what became true then can be equally true now. Hitlerism will never be defeated by counter-Hitlerism. It can only breed superior Hitlerism raised to the *n*th degree. What is going on now before our eyes is a demonstration of the futility of violence, as also of Hitlerism.

"Let me explain what I mean by the failure of Hitlerism. It has robbed the small nations of their liberty. It has compelled France to sue for peace. Probably by the time this is in print, Britain will have decided upon her course. The fall of France is enough for my argument. I think the French statesmen have shown rare courage in bowing to the inevitable and refusing to be a party to senseless

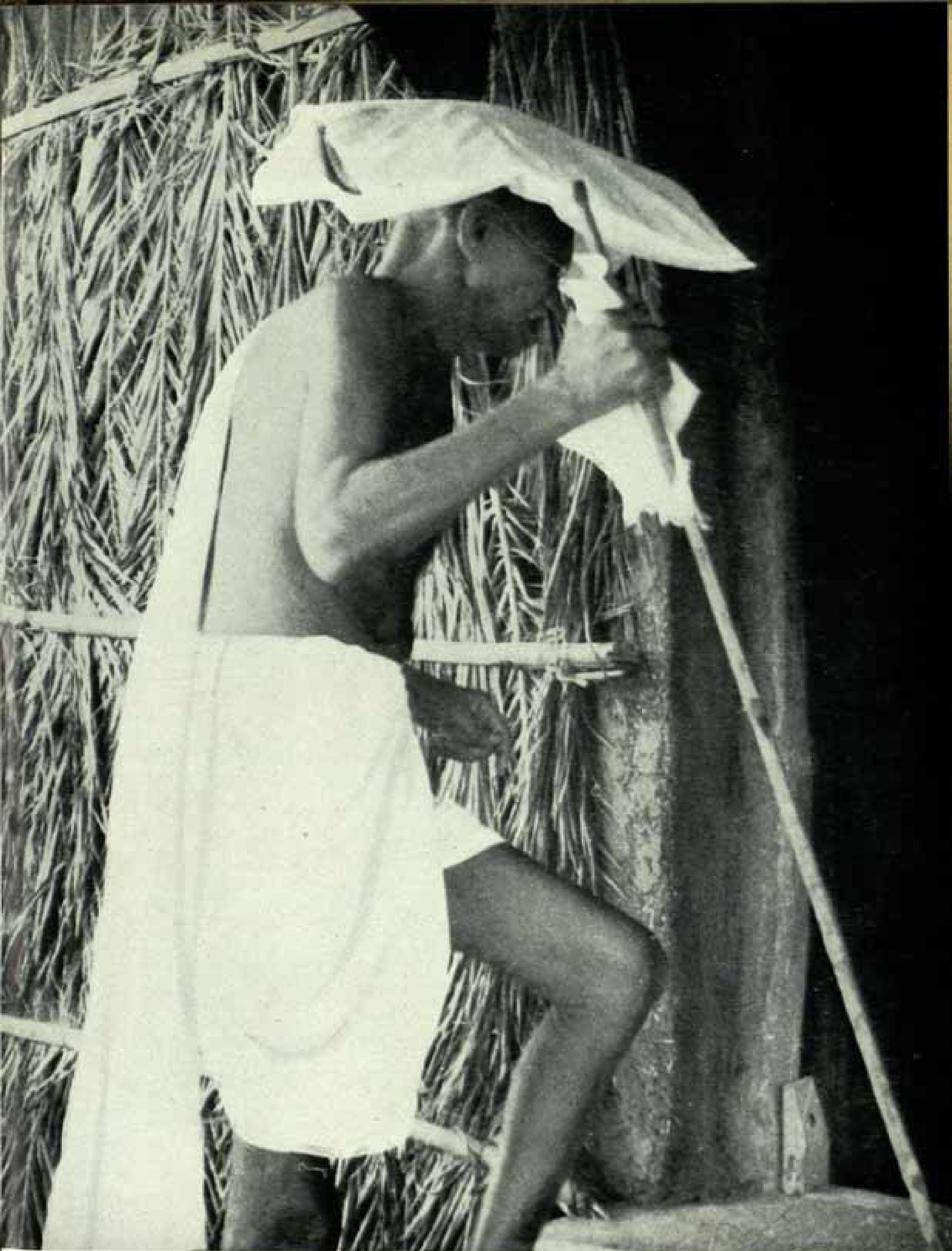


Photograph : Kanu Gandhi

Gandhi at Sevagram, May 1940



With a mud-pack during the hot



Photograph : Kanu Gandhi

days at Sevagram, Summer 1940



Photograph : Kanu Gandhi

With Kasturbai at Sevagram, 1940

Discussion with Rajagopalachari, Sevagram, June 1940 *Photograph: Kanu Gandhi*

On the way to a Working Committee meeting, Sevagram, June 1940 *From Sumati Morarjee Collection*

सेगांव Sevagram
वर्धा होकर (मध्य प्रांत)

9-7-40

Dear Brother,

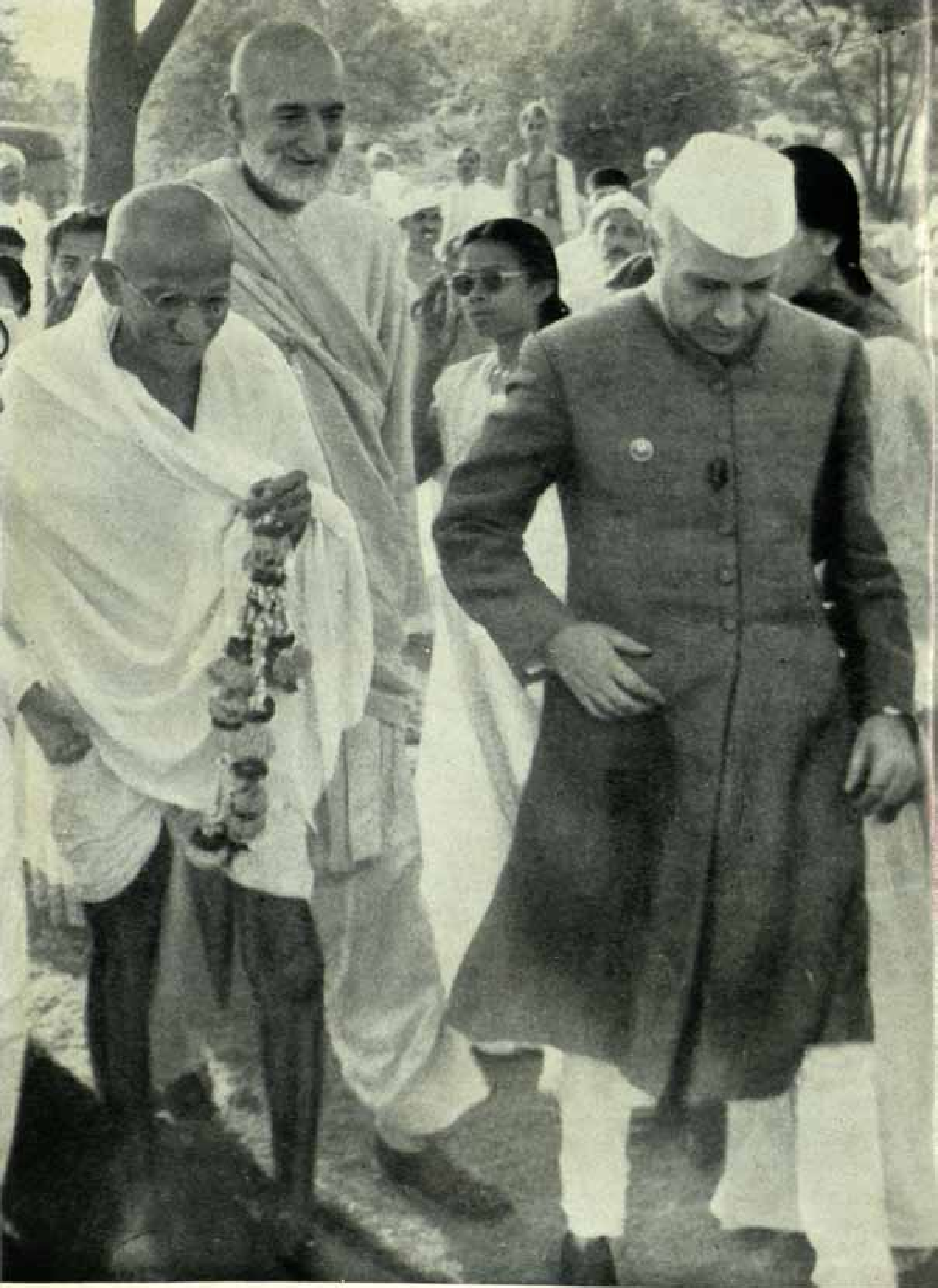
Have just read your letter. Your detachment is simply wonderful. Bapa is an authority on many things—road making, Harijans, Bhils, societys' affairs, following causals[illegible]. But I never knew that he was an authority on interpreting Tulsidas. I should still cite Sita as example for our women. My excitement has never gone beyond. But I must not weary you. Keep me always on the straight & narrow path.

Love
M.K.G.

Gandhi's letter to Srinivasa Sastri, dated Sevagram, July 9, 1940

Gandhi receives five-rupee note for Harijan Fund by signing his autograph *From Sumati Morarjee Collection*

Collecting money for Harijan Fund during a train journey, July 1940 *Photograph : Kanu Gandhi*



From Sumati Morarjee Collection

On the way to a Working Committee meeting at Delhi, July 1940

mutual slaughter. There can be no sense in France coming out victorious, if the stake is in truth lost. The cause of liberty becomes a mockery, if the price to be paid is wholesale destruction of those who are to enjoy liberty. It then becomes an inglorious satiation of ambition. The bravery of the French soldier is world-known. But let the world know also the greater bravery of the French statesmen in suing for peace. I have assumed that the French statesmen have taken the step in a perfectly honourable manner, as behoves true soldiers. Let me hope that Herr Hitler will impose no humiliating terms but show that, though he can fight without mercy, he can at least conclude peace not without mercy.

"But to resume the thread of the argument. What will Hitler do with his victory? Can he digest so much power? Personally, he will go as empty-handed as his not very remote predecessor Alexander. For the Germans, he will have left not the pleasure of owning a mighty empire but the burden of sustaining its crushing weight. For the Germans will not be able to hold all the conquered nations in perpetual subjection. And I doubt, if the Germans of future generations will entertain unadulterated pride in the deeds for which Hitlerism will be deemed responsible. They will honour Herr Hitler as a genius, as a brave man, as a matchless organizer, and much more. But I should hope that the Germans of the future will have learnt the art of discrimination even about their heroes. Anyway I think it will be allowed that all the blood that has been spilled by Hitler has added not a millionth part of an inch to the world's moral stature.

"As against this, imagine the state of Europe today if the Czechs and the Poles, the Norwegians, the French and the English had all said to Hitler: 'You need not make your scientific preparation for destruction. We will meet your violence with non-violence. You will, therefore, be able to destroy our non-violent army without the tanks, battleships and airships.' It may be retorted that the only difference would be that Hitler would have got without fighting what he has gained after a bloody fight. Exactly, the history of Europe would then have been written differently. Possession might—but only might—have been then taken under non-violent resistance, as it has been taken after perpetration of untold barbarities. Under non-violence, only those would have been killed who had trained themselves to be killed, if need be, but without killing anyone and

without bearing malice towards anybody. I dare say, that in that case, Europe would have added several inches to its moral stature. And in the end, I expect it is the moral worth that will count. All else is dross.

"I have written these lines for the European powers. But they are meant for ourselves. If my argument has gone home, is it not time for us to declare our changeless faith in non-violence of the strong and say we do not seek to defend our liberty with the force of arms but we will defend it with the force of non-violence?"

The European situation had for him a lesson that was unmistakably clear. "It fills me with the utmost non-violence," he said. "I cannot think of a better thing to offer to Britain and the defeated nations than non-violence. It is impossible for me to enthuse over the deeds of Hitler or of those who fought or failed to fight him. There is nothing to choose between the victory of Hitler and the defeat of the others. But I have no doubt in my mind that even a patched-up non-violent army would take the wind out of Hitler's sails. I need not have his aeroplanes, his tanks, etc. He need not destroy our homes. Our non-violent army would welcome him, and it may be that he would not dare to come. I know that this may be a day-dream. But I cannot belie the principle of a lifetime or wipe out my day-dreams of the past twenty years. If we have not the non-violent strength of the brave to fight anarchy and aggression, let us say so and reduce ourselves to a small minority hoping to develop non-violence of the strong in the days to come."

The Working Committee which met at Wardha on June 17 did some fierce thinking. The logic of Gandhi's propositions was invincible, but could they go with those propositions to the people? Were they so thoroughly saturated themselves with the spirit of the non-violence of the brave as to be able to carry conviction to the people? Gandhi even drafted a resolution for them. But fain as they would have it, they could not be untrue to themselves. "We feel that we could not accept your position with our mind and heart and soul, and we feel we should not entangle you," they said to him in effect. "And if that is so, why should we accept an untenable position merely to retain your connection? It would be a fraud on ourselves and others."

Gandhi said to them: "I must be left free for my self-expression. I must be free to pursue my search, and I know you will believe

me when I say that I go only to be of more effective service to the Congress, to you and to the nation. Of course, I shall be available when you want me. But I can no longer identify myself with the direction of your policy and your programme. You will, therefore, try your best to do without me and have your meetings in future not in Wardha but elsewhere."

The Working Committee announced on June 21 that they were not able to extend the creed of non-violence to national defence. "Deeply moved by the tragic events that have taken place in Europe in startling succession, and, in particular by the misfortune that has befallen the people of France," the Working Committee felt that the "problems which were distant are now near at hand and may soon demand solution. The problem of the achievement of national freedom has now to be considered along with the one of its maintenance and the defence of the country against possible external and internal disorder."

The Wardha decision left the Working Committee free to take political decisions without having to think of their implications in terms of violence and non-violence. "Mahatma Gandhi," the resolution said, at this critical phase in the history of man, "desires the Congress to be true to the creed of non-violence and to declare its unwillingness that India should maintain armed forces to defend her freedom against the external aggression or internal disorder." The committee "are unable to go to the full length with Gandhiji; but they recognize that he should be free to pursue his great ideal in his own way and, therefore, absolve him from the responsibility for the programme and activity which the Congress has to pursue," namely, the parallel organization of self-defence and the maintenance of public security throughout the country by Congressmen on their own and in full co-operation with the sympathetic groups. The committee further said that "the national struggle for India's independence" must continue on its non-violent course. The war committees aimed at increasing the war effort, therefore, must not be supported. No Congressman must contribute to the war funds or enlist in civil guards under official control.

"Mahatmaji will continue to give his advice and guidance and direction wherever necessary to the Congress Working Committee," said Azad. "The difference between Gandhiji's approach and that of the Working Committee," stated Nehru, "must be understood

and must not lead the people to think that there is a break between him and the Congress. The Congress of the past twenty years is his creation and child and nothing can break the bond."

On June 24, Gandhi wrote an editorial entitled "Both Happy and Unhappy":

"It was on the 18th June that I expressed the following hope in *Harijan*: 'If my argument has gone home, is it not time for us to declare our changeless faith in non-violence of the strong and say we do not seek to defend our liberty with the force of arms but we will defend it with the force of non-violence?'

"On 21st June, the Working Committee felt unable to enforce such faith in action when the time for it came. For the committee never before had an occasion to test their faith. At the last meeting they had to lay down a course of action for meeting impending anarchy within and danger of aggression from without.

"I pleaded hard with the committee: 'If you have faith in non-violence of the strong, now is the time to act up to it. It does not matter that many parties do not believe in non-violence, whether of the strong or of the weak. Probably that is all the greater reason for Congressmen to meet the emergency by non-violent action. For if all were non-violent, there could be no anarchy and there would be no question of anybody arming for meeting aggression from without. It is because Congressmen represent a party of non-violence, in the midst of parties who do not believe in it, that it becomes imperative for Congressmen to show that they are well able to act up to their faith.'

"But the members of the Working Committee felt that Congressmen would not be able to act up to it. It would be a new experience for them. They were never before called upon to deal with such a crisis. The attempt made by me to form the peace brigades to deal with the communal riots and the like had wholly failed. Therefore, they could not hope for the action contemplated.

"My position was different. With the Congress, non-violence was always a policy. It was open to it to reject it, if it failed. If it could not bring political and economic independence, it was of no use. For me, non-violence is a creed. I must act up to it, whether I am alone or have companions. Since the propagation of non-violence is the mission of my life, I must pursue it in all weathers. I felt that now was the time for me to prove my faith before God and man.

And so I asked for my absolution from the committee. Hitherto I have been responsible for guiding the general policy of the Congress. I could no longer do so, when fundamental differences were discovered between them and me. They readily recognized the correctness of my attitude. And they gave me the absolution. Once more they have justified the trust imposed in them. They have been true to themselves. They had not the confidence in themselves or those whom they represented, that they could express in their actions the required measure of non-violence. And so, they made the only choice they could honestly make. It was a tremendous sacrifice they made, the sacrifice of the prestige that the Congress had gained in the world for unadulterated non-violence, and the dissolution of the unwritten and unspoken bond between them and me. But although it is a break in the common practice of a common ideal or policy, there is no break in the friendship of over twenty years' standing.

"I am both happy and unhappy over the result. Happy because I have been able to bear the strain of the break and have been given the strength to stand alone. And unhappy because my word seemed to lose the power to carry with me those whom it was my proud privilege to carry these many years which seem like yesterday. But I know that, if God shows me the way to demonstrate the efficacy of non-violence of the strong, the break will prove to have been temporary. If there is no way, they will have justified their wisdom in bearing the wrench of letting me go my way alone. If that tragic discovery of my impotency is in store for me, I hope still to retain the faith that has sustained me all these years and to have humility enough to realize that I was not fit enough instrument to carry the torch of non-violence any further.

"But, this argument and doubt are based upon the assumption that the members of the Working Committee represent the feeling of the vast majority of Congressmen. They would wish and I hope that the vast majority of Congressmen had in them the non-violence of the strong. No one would be more glad than they to discover that they had underrated Congressmen's strength. The probability, however, is that there is no majority but only a good minority which represents the non-violence of the strong. It should be remembered that the matter does not lend itself to argument. The members of the Working Committee had all the argument before

them. But non-violence, which is a quality of the heart, cannot come by an appeal to the brain. Therefore, what is required is a quiet but resolute demonstration of non-violent strength. This opportunity comes to everyone almost daily. There are communal clashes, there are dacoities, and there are wordy duels. In all these things, those who are truly non-violent can and will demonstrate it. If it is shown in an adequate measure, it will not fail to infect their surroundings. I am quite certain, that there is not a single Congressman who disbelieves in the efficacy of non-violence out of sheer cussedness. Therefore, let the Congressmen who believe that the Congress should adhere to non-violence in dealing with internal disorders or external aggression, express it in their daily conduct. Non-violence of the strong cannot be a mere policy. It must be a creed, or a passion, if 'creed' is objected to. A man with a passion expresses it in every little act of his. Therefore, he who is possessed by non-violence will express it in the family circle, in his dealings with neighbours, in his business, in the Congress meetings, in the public meetings, and in his dealings with opponents. It is because it has not expressed itself in this way among the Congressmen that the members of the Working Committee rightly concluded that the Congressmen were not ready for non-violent treatment of internal disorders or external aggression. The embarrassment caused by non-violent action would move established authority to yield to popular will. But such action has obviously no play in the face of disorders. We have to court death without retaliation and with no malice or anger towards those who bring about disorder. It is easy enough to see that the non-violence required here is of a wholly different type from what the Congress has known hitherto. But it is the only non-violence that is true and that can save the world which wants to be saved from the curse of wars and does not know how to find the deliverance.

"P.S. After the foregoing was written and typed, I saw Jawaharlal's statement. His love for and confidence in me peep out of every sentence referring to me. The foregoing does not need any amendment. It is better for the reader to have both the independent reactions. Good must come out of this separation."

The Congress Working Committee over, he addressed the joint meeting of the Gandhi Seva Sangh and the Charkha Sangh: "Now is the testing time for you. The Working Committee, let us say,

were weighed and found wanting. Can the Gandhi Seva Sangh do anything to repair their failure? The Working Committee's resolution does not mean that you cannot appeal to the people to declare their faith in non-violence. You can do so, and then tell the members of the Working Committee, 'You undervalued our faith. We are going to hold by the creed.' I tell you that the Working Committee members will not only not resent this, but will simply dance with joy. Some of you are members of the Congress. It is the duty of those who are members and who believe in non-violence to reassure the members of the Working Committee, to declare their faith before the meeting of the A.-I.C.C. and even before the open Congress, if the time comes. But you may not separate your creed as Congressmen and your creed as ordinary human beings, your behaviour in the Congress affairs and in non-Congress affairs, your non-violence, if it is true, must be part of your normal life, must be in your thought, word and deed, and must colour all your behaviour. Then and then only, can you give the Working Committee the assurance I have referred to, and compel them to alter their resolution.

"But let me explain this still further. You will examine every action of yours in the light of the creed. That does not mean that you will be morbid or pernickety. Your conduct will have to be natural. When I began observing silence it meant an effort on my part. Now it has become part of my nature and to break my silence means an effort. In the same way, acting non-violently must become part of your nature. It is likely that your relating everything to non-violence may be logically wrong, but it is not wrong for you. I may be wrong, in the eyes of others, in my belief that with every thread that I draw I am bringing swaraj nearer, but for me the belief is as true as the fact that I exist. That saves me from losing my sanity. This spinning wheel is a symbol of non-violence for me. The wheel as such is lifeless, but when I invest it with symbolism it becomes a living thing for me. Its sound, if it is musical, is in tune with non-violence. If it is unmusical, it is not in tune with it, for it indicates carelessness on my part. The steel spindle one can use as a deadly weapon, but we have put it there for the best possible use. So we have to be meticulously careful about every part of the wheel. Then and then only, will it produce fine music and spinning will be a true sacrificial act.

"But this kind of *sadhana*, you will say, may take thousands of years. It may take some a thousand years, and it may take some others only one year. Don't think that, if in spite of my fifty years' practice of it, I am still imperfect, it must take you many more years. No, there is no rule of three here. You may succeed quicker than I. I meant what I said to Prithwi Singh: 'You had at any rate the violence of the brave. I had nothing of it. Now, if you believe in cultivating non-violence of the brave, you will do so much more quickly than I, and you will leave me behind.' This applies, to every one of you. In South Africa, I was the first to learn shoemaking, and so I taught it to others. But those others soon left me behind. It was because I was a true teacher. Now if I am a true teacher of ahimsa, I am sure that you will soon leave behind your teacher. If that does not happen, it will only mean that I was an unfit teacher. But if my teaching fructifies, there will be teachers of ahimsa in every home.

"I want to know how many of you are with me. If none goes with me, I am ready to tread my path alone. For, I know that I can never be alone, as God is there with me. You are all seekers with me. I am old, but you have many years before you. And yet let me tell you that I do not feel the weight of my years. I do not think that my power of growth or capacity for research has come to an end.

"So you have to go forth and find out how many actual believers in ahimsa there are among Congressmen. The Working Committee members are your representatives. If they were mistaken in assessing the faith of their electors, you have to correct their judgement. My position was different from theirs. I consider myself a confirmed representative of ahimsa, and so I severed my connection with the Congress in 1934. I could not help doing it. If I had not done so, I should have been untrue to my creed.

"No one knows my imperfections better than I, but what little power I possess is derived from ahimsa. What is it but my ahimsa that draws thousands of women to me in fearless confidence? But neither you nor I can trade on our capital. We have to be up and doing every moment of our lives, and go forward in our *sadhana*. We have to live and move and have our being in ahimsa, even as Hitler does in *himsa*. It is the faith and perseverance and single-mindedness with which he has perfected his weapons of destruction

that commands my admiration. That he uses them as a monster is immaterial for our purpose. We have to bring to bear the same single-mindedness and perseverance in evolving ahimsa. Hitler is awake all the twenty-four hours of the day in perfecting his *sadhana*. He wins, because he pays the price. Hitler's inventions surprise his enemies. But it is his single-minded devotion to his purpose that should be the object of our admiration and emulation. Though he works all his waking hours, his intellect is unclouded and unerring. Are our intellects unclouded and unerring? A mere belief in ahimsa or the charkha will not do. It should be intelligent and creative. If intellect plays a large part in the field of violence, I hold that it plays a larger part in the field of non-violence."

With this, Gandhi referred to the work of Richard Gregg in this direction, and described how the latter had come to the conclusion that spinning as a symbol of non-violence is good enough not only for India but for the whole world.

Continuing, he stated: "The Working Committee's decision was simply an echo of the atmosphere around them. My decision could not be its echo. For, ahimsa is my special *sadhana*, not that of the Congress. I congratulate the members on their honesty and their courage, although I am sorry for myself that I could not inspire them with confidence in our creed and in my leadership. We have now to show that we have faith in the non-violence of the brave. It does not mean the development of the capacity to go to jail. It means increasing faith in the potency of constructive work to bring about swaraj, and in constructive work being the vital part of the programme of ahimsa."

In the concluding part of his speech, Gandhi said: "In placing civil disobedience before the constructive work I was wrong, and I did not profit by the Himalayan blunder that I had committed. I feared that I should estrange my co-workers and so I carried on with imperfect ahimsa. But I am not sorry for my blunders. My imperfections and my failures are as much a blessing from God as my successes and my talents, and I lay them both at His feet. Why should God have chosen me, an imperfect instrument, for such a mighty experiment? I think that He deliberately did so. He had to serve the poor dumb ignorant millions. A perfect man might have been their despair. When they found that one with their failings was marching on towards ahimsa, they too had confidence in their

own capacity. We should not have recognized a perfect man, if he had come as our leader, and we might have driven him to a cave. May be, he who follows me will be more perfect, and you will be able to receive his message. May be, some one of you may be that perfect teacher who is to come."

Again the Viceroy sent for Gandhi and had a long interview at Simla on June 29. From Delhi, on July 1, Gandhi wrote a warning article, "Some Vital Questions":

"H. E. the Viceroy is again conferring with the leaders of parties. I was invited, but not as a party leader or a leader at all. I was invited as a friend to help him, if I could, to come to a definite conclusion, especially to interpret the Congress mind to him. It is better, in the light of what is happening—and things will presently move with lightning velocity—to consider some of the questions that will demand quick decision, if they will not have been decided before these lines are in print.

"The first thing that everyone has to consider for himself is whether dominion status of the Westminster variety can be acceptable to India. If it has not become a myth already, it will be at the end of the war. Britain herself, victorious or defeated, will never be the same as she has been for these few hundred years. But this much is certain that her defeat, if it must come, will certainly be glorious. If Britain is defeated, she will be because no other power similarly situated could have avoided defeat. I cannot say the same of her victory. It will be bought by the progressive adoption of the same means as the totalitarian states have adopted. I must say with the deepest pain that British statesmen have rejected the only moral influence they could easily have got from the Congress to turn the scales in Britain's favour. It is no blame to her statesmen that they have not availed themselves of that influence. They did not see the need of it. It may well be that they did not perceive the moral influence itself which I have claimed for the Congress. Whatever may be the case, it is clear to me that India's immediate objective must be unadulterated independence. This is no time for mincing words or hiding our thoughts. I cannot think of anyone wanting less than independence for this country, if he can get it. No country has ever got it without its people having fought for it. Anyway, the Congress made up its mind long ago. Even if India is to render effective help to Britain, it can come from free India.

Crores may be drained from India as of yore, thousands of men may be hired as soldiers or as camp-followers out of her teeming millions. All such contributions will be from helpless India. They cannot raise the moral status of Britain.

"The next question for consideration is that of providing for disorder and external invasion. The raising of the private armies will be worse than useless. It will never be allowed. No power, whether foreign or swadeshi, can tolerate private armies. Those, therefore, who believe in the necessity of India having armed force will sooner or later be driven to enlist themselves under the British banner. It is the logical outcome of the belief. The Working Committee have taken the decision on the point. If it is to abide, I have little doubt that the committee will presently have to advise Congressmen to enlist in the usual way. That would mean an end to the slogan of immediate independence and an end also to non-violence of the true brand. I shall hope to the last that for the sake of themselves, India, aye, Britain herself, and humanity. Congressmen will resolutely decline to have anything to do with the use of arms for any of the two purposes. I feel strongly that the future of humanity lies in the hands of the Congress. May God give wisdom and courage to Congressmen to take the right step.

"The offer of enlarging the Viceroy's Council is on the tapis. The Congress cannot countenance it, so long as it swears by independence and non-violence. But if it sidetracks them, it will be logically driven to reconstructing the Congress ministries in the provinces. This means the Congress becoming a vital part of the war machine. The Government of India have no other occupation but that of preparing India for defending Britain. It is an illusion to talk of preparing India for self-defence. No power has eyes on India except as a British possession. As such she is a rich prize. Is not India the brightest jewel in the British Crown? But I own that, if India is to learn the trade of war, she can now have her apprenticeship to the extent that the British masters will allow.

"The Congress has to make its choice. The temptation is irresistible. Congressmen can again become the cabinet ministers. They may also become ministers or members at the Centre. They will have an insight into the war machine. They will watch from inside, again to the extent allowed, the Englishman at work when engaged in a life and death struggle. They will have to raise crores of rupees

and to dispose of them in the war effort. If I have my own way, I would have the Congress to resist the irresistible temptation and not grudge those who believe in the accepted method filling these posts. There will be Musalmans, Hindus, Sikhs, Christians, Parsis and others taking up these posts, as they have done before now. They too are our countrymen. We must give them credit for good faith. But let us, who believe in independence and the only way to attain it, hold fast to the objective and the means. I can see much good coming out of this division of functions. For the Congress, to merge itself into the stereotyped method would be a disaster of the first magnitude. If, on the other hand, the Congress sticks to its colours, it is sure to fight its way to its goal even before the war is over, provided that the fight is purely, truly and democratically non-violent."

The following day, on July 3, Gandhi issued his famous appeal, "To Every Briton".

"In 1896, I addressed an appeal to every Briton in South Africa on behalf of my countrymen who had gone there as labourers or traders and their assistants. It had its effect. However important it was from my viewpoint, the cause which I pleaded then was insignificant compared with the cause which prompts this appeal. I appeal to every Briton, wherever he may be now, to accept the method of non-violence instead of that of war for the adjustment of the relations between nations and other matters. Your statesmen have declared that this is a war on behalf of democracy. There are many other reasons given in justification. You know them all by heart. I suggest that at the end of the war, whichever way it ends, there will be no democracy left to represent democracy. This war has descended upon mankind as a curse and as a warning. It is a curse, inasmuch as it is brutalizing man on a scale hitherto unknown. All distinctions between combatants and non-combatants have been abolished. No one and nothing is to be spared. Lying has been reduced to an art. Britain was to defend small nationalities. One by one they have vanished, at least for the time being. It also is a warning. It is a warning that, if nobody reads the writing on the wall, man will be reduced to the state of the beast, whom he is shaming by his manners. I read the writing, when the hostilities broke out. But I had not the courage to say the word. God has given me the courage to say it before it is too late.

"I appeal for the cessation of hostilities, not because you are too exhausted to fight, but because war is bad in essence. You want to kill Nazism. You will never kill it by its indifferent adoption. Your soldiers are doing the same work of destruction as the Germans. The only difference is that perhaps yours are not as thorough as that of the Germans. And if that be so, yours will soon acquire the same thoroughness as theirs, if not much greater. On no other condition can you win this war. In other words, you will have to be more ruthless than the Nazis. No cause, however just, can warrant the indiscriminate slaughter that is going on minute by minute. I suggest that a cause that demands the inhumanities that are being perpetrated today cannot be called just.

"I do not want Britain to be defeated, nor do I want her to be victorious in a trial of brute strength, whether expressed through the muscle or brain. Your muscular bravery is an established fact. Need you demonstrate that your brain is also as unrivalled in destructive power as your muscle? I hope you do not wish to enter into such an undignified competition with the Nazis. I venture to present you with a nobler and braver way, worthy of the bravest soldier. I want you to fight Nazism without arms, or, if I am to retain the military terminology, with non-violent arms. I would like you to lay down the arms you have, as being useless for saving you or humanity. You will invite Herr Hitler and Signor Mussolini to take what they want of the countries you call your possessions. Let them take possession of your beautiful island, with your many beautiful buildings. You will give all these, but neither your souls, nor your minds. If these gentlemen choose to occupy your homes, you will vacate them. If they do not give you free passage out, you will allow yourself, man, woman and child, to be slaughtered, but you will refuse to owe allegiance to them.

"This process or this method, which I have called non-violent non-co-operation, is not without considerable success in its use in India. Your representatives in India may deny my claim. If they do, I shall feel sorry for them. They may tell you that our non-co-operation was not wholly non-violent, that it was born of hatred. If they give that testimony, I will not deny it. Had it been wholly non-violent, if all non-co-operators had been filled with goodwill towards you, I make bold to say that you who are India's masters would have become her pupils and, with much greater skill than

we have, perfected this matchless weapon and met the German and Italian friends' menace with it. Indeed the history of Europe during the past few months would then have been written differently and Europe would have been spared seas of innocent blood, the rape of so many small nations, and the orgy of hatred.

"This is no appeal made by a man who does not know his business. I have been practising with scientific precision non-violence and its possibilities for an unbroken period of over fifty years. I have applied it in every walk of life, domestic and institutional, economic and political. I know of no single case in which it has failed. Where it has seemed sometimes to have failed, I have ascribed it to my imperfections. I claim no perfection for myself. But I do claim to be a passionate seeker after Truth, which is but another name for God. In the course of that search, discovery of non-violence came to me. Its spread is my life mission. I have no interest in living except for the prosecution of that mission.

"I claim to have been a lifelong and wholly disinterested friend of the British people. At one time I used to be also a lover of your empire. I thought that it was doing good to India. When I saw that in the nature of things it could do no good, I used, and am still using, the non-violent method to fight imperialism. Whatever the ultimate fate of my country, my love for you remains, and will remain, undiminished. My non-violence demands universal love, and you are not a small part of it. It is that love which has prompted my appeal to you.

"May God give power to every word of mine. In His name, I began to write this, and in His name I close it. May your statesmen have the wisdom and the courage to respond to my appeal. I am telling His Excellency the Viceroy that my services are at the disposal of His Majesty's Government should they consider them of any practical use in advancing the object of my appeal."

At Gandhi's request the appeal, "his personal and humble contribution to Britain's cause", was conveyed by the Viceroy to His Majesty's Government. "With every appreciation of your motives," the Viceroy replied, "they do not feel that the policy which you advocate is one which it is possible for them to consider, since, in common with the whole empire, they are firmly resolved to prosecute the war to a victorious conclusion." No newspaper in Great Britain published his appeal except in bits.

Gandhi's appeal came when a German attack on Britain seemed imminent. "That appeal has probably created more ill will than anything else recently," observed an English admirer. "We live in astonishing and critical times, and it is frightfully difficult to decide what should be done. At any rate, we should try to avoid obvious dangers. So far as I can see, the Mahatma's unadulterated policy must inevitably lead to disaster for India. How far he himself intends following it I do not know, for he has a wonderful way of adapting himself to his material."

"Well," said Gandhi, "I happen to know that many more than one single heart have been touched by my 'Appeal to Every Briton'. I know many English friends were anxious for me to take some such step. But I do not want to take comfort from the approbation, however pleasing in itself, of English friends. What is of value for me is to know that at least one Englishman thinks as stated in the extract. Such knowledge should put me on my guard. It should make me more careful, if possible, in the selection of the words I use to express my thought. But no displeasure, even of the dearest friends, can put me off the duty I see clearly in front of me. And this duty of making the appeal was so peremptory that it was impossible for me to put it off. As certain as I am writing this, the world has to come to the state to which I have invited Britain. Those who will be witnesses of that happy and most far-off event will recall my appeal with gladness. I know that the appeal has hastened its advent.

"And why should a single Briton resent an appeal to him to be braver than he is, to be better than he is in every respect? He may plead inability, but he cannot be displeased by an appeal to his nobler nature.

"Why should the appeal breed any ill will at all? There is no cause given for it by the manner or the matter of the appeal. I have not advised the cessation of fight. I have advised lifting it to a plane worthy of human nature, of the Divinity man shares with God Himself. If the hidden meaning of these remarks is that by making the appeal I have strengthened the Nazi hands, the suggestion does not bear scrutiny. Herr Hitler can only be confounded by the adoption by Britain of the novel method of fighting. At one single stroke, he will find that all his tremendous armament has been put out of action. A warrior lives on his wars whether offensive

or defensive. And he suffers a collapse, if he finds that his warring capacity is unwanted.

"My appeal is not from a coward to brave people to shed their bravery, nor is it a mockery from a fair-weather friend to one in distress. I suggest to the writer to re-read my appeal in the light of my explanation.

"One thing Herr Hitler, as every critic, may say: I am a fool without any knowledge of the world or of the human nature. That would be a harmless certificate which need excite neither ill will nor anger. It would be harmless because I have earned such certificates before now. This one would be the latest of the many editions, and I hope not the last, for my foolish experiments have not yet ended.

"So far as India is concerned, my unadulterated policy can never harm her, if she adopts it. If India as a whole rejects it, there can be no harm accruing except to those who may foolishly pursue it. The correspondent has lighted upon my strong point, when he says: 'Mahatma has a wonderful way of adapting himself to his material.' My instinctive knowledge of my material has given me a faith which cannot be moved. I feel within me that the material is ready. My instinct has not betrayed me once. But I must not build much upon past experience. 'One step enough for me.'"

An emergency meeting of the Working Committee held at Delhi on July 3 renewed its demand for an immediate and unequivocal declaration of the full independence of India with a new proposal. "As an immediate step to giving effect to it, a provisional National Government should be constituted at the Centre which, although formed as a transitory measure, should be such as to command the confidence of all the elected elements in the Central Legislature and secure the closest co-operation of the responsible governments in the provinces. The Working Committee are of opinion that, unless the aforesaid declaration is made and the national government accordingly formed at the Centre without delay, all the efforts at organizing the material and the moral resources of the country for the defence cannot in any sense be voluntary or as from a free country, and will, therefore, be ineffective. The Congress Working Committee declare that, if these measures are adopted, it will enable the Congress to throw its full weight into the efforts for the effective organization of the defence of the country."

There was a doubt as to the interpretation of "defence". Azad and Rajagopalachari declared that the resolution implied the full participation of the Congress in the war, if its terms were granted. "We have made it perfectly clear in the past," said Nehru, "that we cannot help the war effort of the British imperialism or become its recruiting sergeants. That position continues unchanged, but to maintain our own independence, for our defence and the defence of freedom, we are prepared under our own direction to do our best." Ghaffar Khan resigned from the Working Committee because of his strict adherence to non-violence.

On the train to Wardha, on July 7, Gandhi wrote an article entitled "A Cry In the Wilderness" in Gujarati, and he declared his intention henceforth to write only in Gujarati and issue authorized translation in English and Hindustani:

"Bapuji Aney on his way back from Simla paid a flying visit to me at Delhi on Saturday. Whether we work together, or seem to be working in opposite directions, his love for me endures, and therefore, he never misses an opportunity to look in, wherever I may be. During his Delhi visit he sympathized with me for my having had to sever my connection with the Congress, but he really congratulated me. 'They should, I think, leave you in peace,' he said, 'and let you go your own way. I read your "Appeal To Every Briton". It will fall on the deaf ears. But that does not matter to you. You cannot help telling them what you feel to be their *dharma*. It is not strange that they will not listen to you—seeing that the Congress itself did not listen to you at the critical moment. When even the sage Vyasa failed to make himself heard, how should then others fare any better? Vyasa had to conclude his great epic—the Mahabharata—with a verse which reveals the cry of his soul.' He thereby strengthened my faith, and showed how difficult was the way I had chosen. . .

"What are these apparently new fields for the operation of non-violence? Those who have followed the resolutions of the Working Committee and the writings in *Harijan* are now familiar with these. Non-violence in its operation against the constituted authority is one field. We have exercised this up to now with a fair amount of success, and I have always described it as the non-violence of the weak. This non-violence may be said to have come to stay with the Congressmen.

"The other field is the exercise of ahimsa in the internal disturbances, Hindu-Muslim riots and the like. We have not been able to show visible success in the exercise of ahimsa in this field. What then should the Congressmen do when the internal chaos is so imminent? Will the Congressmen return blow for blow, or will they cheerfully bend their heads to receive violent blows? The answer to this is not so easy as we might think. Instead of going into the intricacies, I should say that the Congressmen should try to save the situation by laying down their lives, not by taking any. He who meets death without striking a blow, fulfils his duty cent per cent. The result is in God's hands.

"But it is clear that this non-violence is not the non-violence of the weak. It does not give one the joy of jail-going. One can have that joy and can also cover thereby the ill will that one harbours in his breast against the Government. One can also non-co-operate against the Government. But where the swords, knives, lathis and stones are freely used, what is a man to do single-handed? Is it possible for one to receive these deadly blows with ill will in one's heart? It is clear that it is impossible to do so, unless one is saturated with charity. It is only he who feels one with his opponent that can receive blows as though they were so many flowers. Even one such man, if God favours him, can do the work of a thousand. It requires soul-force, moral courage, of the highest type.

"The man or the woman who can display this non-violence of the brave can easily stand against an external invasion. This is the third field for the exercise of non-violence. The Congress Working Committee were of the opinion that, while it might be possible for us to exercise non-violence in internal disturbances, India has not the strength to exercise ahimsa against the invasion of a foreign foe. This their want of faith has distressed me. I do not believe that the unarmed millions of India cannot exercise ahimsa with success in this wide field. It is for Congressmen to reassure Sardar Patel, whose faith in the ahimsa of the strong has for the moment been shaken, that ahimsa is the only weapon that can suit India in the fields mentioned. Let no one ask, 'But what about the martial races in India?' For me, that is all the more reason why Congressmen should train themselves to defend their country with a non-violent army. This is an entirely new experiment. But who, save the Congress, is to try it—the Congress which has tried it successfully in one

field? It is my unshakable faith that, if we have a sufficient number of non-violent soldiers we are sure to succeed even in this new field, apart from the saving of the needless waste of crores of rupees.

"I am, therefore, hoping that all the Gujarati Congressites, men and women, will declare their adherence to ahimsa and reassure the Sardar that they will never resort to violence. Even if there is sure hope of success in the exercise of violence, they will not prefer it to the exercise of non-violence. We are sure to learn by our mistakes. 'We fall to rise, are baffled to fight better, sleep to wake.' "

The next day, commenting on the Delhi resolution, he wrote:

"I have just seen the news that the Working Committee's fateful resolution has been released to the press. It was passed in my presence, but I wanted to say nothing before it was actually released for publication. It will be a profound mistake to suppose that the members passed the five solid days in wrangling. They had to discharge a heavy responsibility. And though logically the resolution is no departure from the Ramgarh resolution, it is undoubted departure from its spirit. The letter often remains constant, but the spirit changes. Up to now, for one reason or another, the Congress policy was: No participation in the war except for the moral influence that the Congress can exercise, if their vital demand was satisfied of Britain's own free will. Such was not the position of all the members of the Working Committee. Hence at this critical moment, every member had to make up his or her mind independently of the rest. The five days were the days of tremendous heart-searching. I had produced a draft resolution which almost all the members thought was the best, if they could bring to bear a living belief in non-violence through and through, or if they could truthfully say that such was the belief of their constituencies. Some had neither, and some had individually the required faith. Only Khan Saheb was clear, so far as his own faith and that of his beloved Khudai Khidmatgars were concerned. Therefore he had decided even after the last Wardha resolution that he had no place in the Congress. Khan Saheb had a special mission and a special duty to his followers. So the Working Committee gladly permitted him to retire from the Congress. By retiring, he serves the Congress all the more, even as I hope to do. Who knows that those of us who retire, may not be able to give our comrades the faith they seem, for the moment, to have lost?

"Rajaji was the framer of the resolution. He was as certain of his position, as I was of mine. His persistency and courage and utter humility brought him converts. Sardar Patel was his greatest prize. He would not have even thought of bringing up his resolution, if I had chosen to prevent him. But I give my comrades the same credit for earnestness and self-confidence that I claim for myself. I had long known that we were drifting away from each other in our outlook upon the political problems that face us. He will not allow me to say that his is a departure from ahimsa. He claims that his very ahimsa has led him to the point which culminated in his resolution. He thinks that I suffer from obsession owing to too much brooding on ahimsa. He almost thinks that my vision is blurred. It was no use my returning the compliment, though, half joking, I did. I have no proof, save my faith, to question Rajaji's counter faith. That is evidently absurd. I could not carry the Working Committee with me at Wardha and so I got my absolution. I at once saw as clear as daylight that, if my position was not acceptable, Rajaji was the only real alternative. I, therefore, encouraged him to persist in his effort, though all the while I held him to be hopelessly in the wrong. And by exemplary patience, skill and considerateness towards his opponents, Rajaji got a good majority, five remaining neutral. I had a fearful moment. Generally, such resolutions are not carried by the majority vote. But at this juncture, unanimity was not to be expected. I advised that Rajaji's resolution should be enforced. And so at the last moment, the committee decided that the resolution should go forth to the world.

"It was necessary for the public to have this background to the tremendous step the Working Committee have taken for good or ill. Those Congressmen who have a living faith in the non-violence of the strong will naturally abstain. For the moment, however, what they can do is wholly irrelevant. Rajaji's resolution represents the considered policy of the Congress. The non-Congressmen who were eager for the Congress to be free of my religious bias to adopt a purely political attitude, should welcome the resolution and support it whole-heartedly. So should the Muslim League, and even the princes who think of India more than their principalities.

"The British Government have to make their choice. Independence they cannot withhold unless their wisdom is as much blurred as Rajaji claims that mine is. If independence is recognized, the

acceptance of the other part of the resolution follows as a matter of course. The question is: Do the British Government want to impress help from India by virtue of their rulership over India or will they have the help that a free and independent India can give? My individual advice has already gone. My help always has been promised. Acceptance of that advice can but enhance their heroism. But if they cannot accept it, I advise, as a disinterested but staunch friend, that the British Government should not reject the hand of friendship offered by the Congress."

Qualified Ahimsa

1940

UNDER the Defence of India Rules, the arrests and convictions of the leftists were rife all over the country. On the return journey to Wardha, a young man asked Gandhi why the Working Committee had not taken any notice of Subhas Bose's arrest in connection with the Holwell monument in Calcutta. Gandhi was observing silence and so he gave his reply through *Harijan* of July 13, 1940:

"It is true that Subhas Babu is an ex-Rashtrapati of the Congress, twice elected in succession. He has a record of great sacrifice to his credit. He is a leader born. But all these qualities alone will not warrant a protest against the arrest. The Working Committee would be bound to take notice of it, if it could be condemned on merits. Subhas Babu did not defy the law with the permission of the Congress. But he has frankly and courageously defied even the Working Committee. If he had asked for permission to raise any side issue for battle at the present juncture, the committee would, I think, have refused it. Hundreds of issues of greater importance can be discovered. But the country's attention is for the moment riveted upon one single issue. The preparations are being made to take up the direct action at the proper time on that issue. Therefore, if the Working Committee had taken any action, it would have been one of disapprobation. That the committee would not do. I might also have ignored the youth's remark. But I felt that no harm could occur by my putting this arrest in its proper setting. The arrest of a big man like Subhas Babu is no small matter. But Subhas Babu has laid out his plan of battle with deliberateness and boldness. He thinks that his way is the best. He honestly thinks that the Working Committee's way is wrong, and that nothing good will come out of its 'procrastination'. He told me in the friendliest manner that he would do what the Working Committee had failed to do. He was impatient of delay. I told him that, if at the end of

his plan, there was swaraj during my lifetime, mine would be the first telegram of congratulation he would receive. And if while he was conducting his campaign I became a convert, I should wholeheartedly acclaim him as my leader and enlist under his banner. But I warned him that his way was wrong.

"My opinion, however, matters little. So long as Subhas Babu considers a particular course of action to be correct, he has every right, and it is his duty, to pursue it whether the Congress likes it or not. I told him that he would be more in the right, if he resigned from the Congress altogether. My advice did not commend itself to him. Even so, if success attends his effort and India gains her freedom, it will justify his rebellion, and the Congress will not only not condemn his rebellion but welcome him as a saviour.

"In satyagraha, a courted imprisonment carries its own praise. There can be no protest against an imprisonment for the breach of the current law of the land. On the contrary, the practice has been to congratulate arrested civil resisters and invite Congressmen to imitate them. It is obvious that the committee could not do so in Subhas Babu's case. Let me remark in passing that the committee has taken no notice of the numerous arrests and imprisonments that have taken place even of prominent Congressmen. It does not mean that the committee does not feel anything about them. But in life's battle, there is such a thing as mute submission to many a wrong. If it is deliberate, it generates strength which, if the submission is well conceived, may well become irresistible."

In the next issue of *Harijan*, he commented on Ghaffar Khan's resignation from the Working Committee:

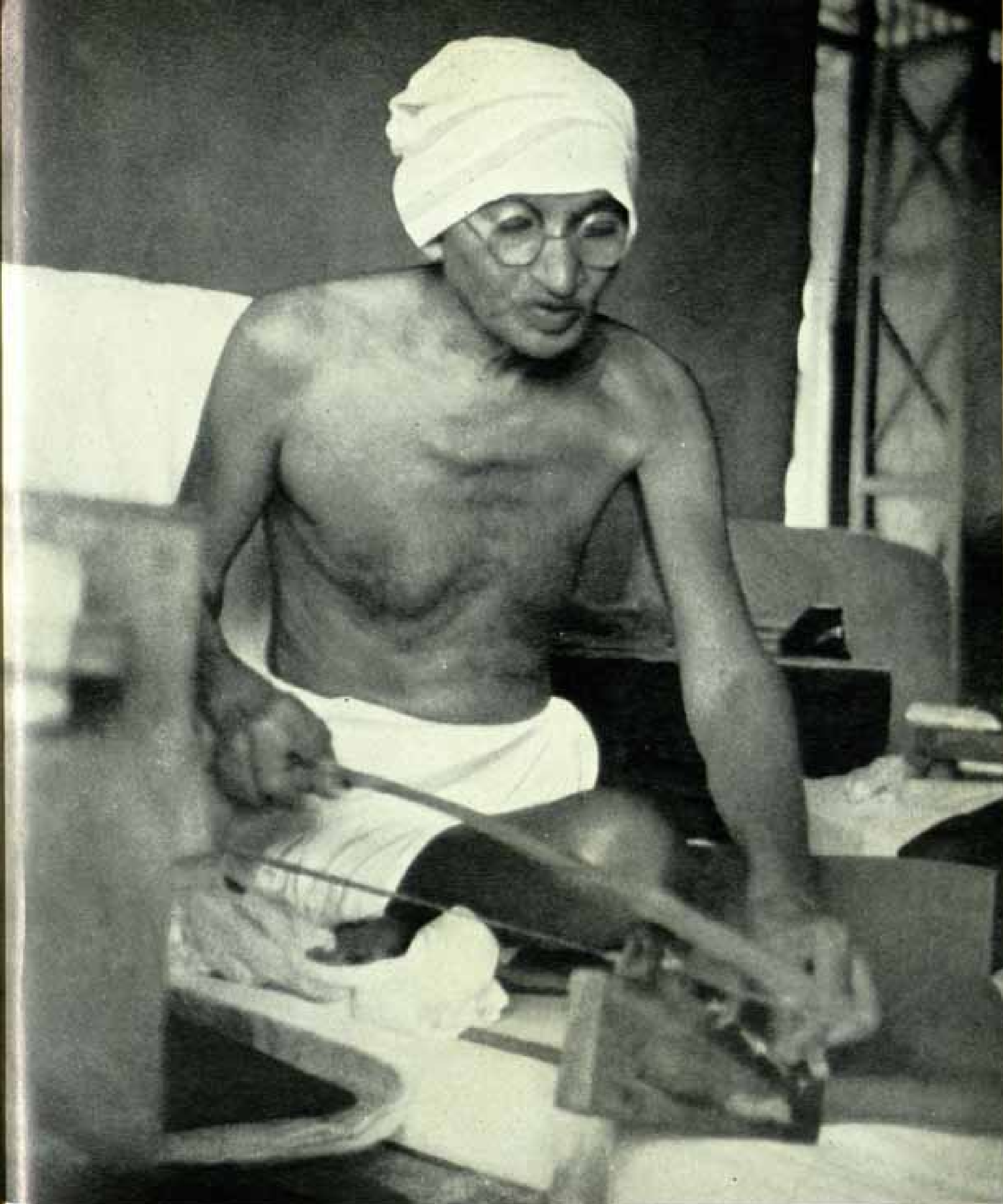
"In the storm that shook most of the members of the Congress Working Committee, Khan Saheb Abdul Ghaffar Khan stood firm as a rock. He had never any doubt about his own position and his statement which I reproduce below should serve as a beacon light to all of us:

" 'Some recent resolutions of the Congress Working Committee indicate that the committee are restricting the use of non-violence to the fight for India's freedom against constituted authority. How far and in what manner this will have to be applied in the future I cannot say. The near future will, perhaps, throw light on this. Meanwhile it is difficult for me to continue in the Congress Working Committee, and I am resigning from it. I should like to make

it clear that the non-violence I have believed in and preached to my brethren of the Khudai Khidmatgars is much wider. It affects all our life, and only this has permanent value. Unless we learn this lesson of non-violence fully, we shall never do away with the deadly feuds which have been the curse of the Frontier people. Since we took to non-violence and the Khudai Khidmatgars pledged themselves to it, we have largely succeeded in ending these feuds. Non-violence has added greatly to the courage of the Pathans. Because they were previously addicted to violence far more than others, they have profited by non-violence much more. We shall never really and effectively defend ourselves except through non-violence. Khudai Khidmatgars must, therefore, be what our name implies, pure servants of God and humanity, by laying down our own lives and never taking any life.'

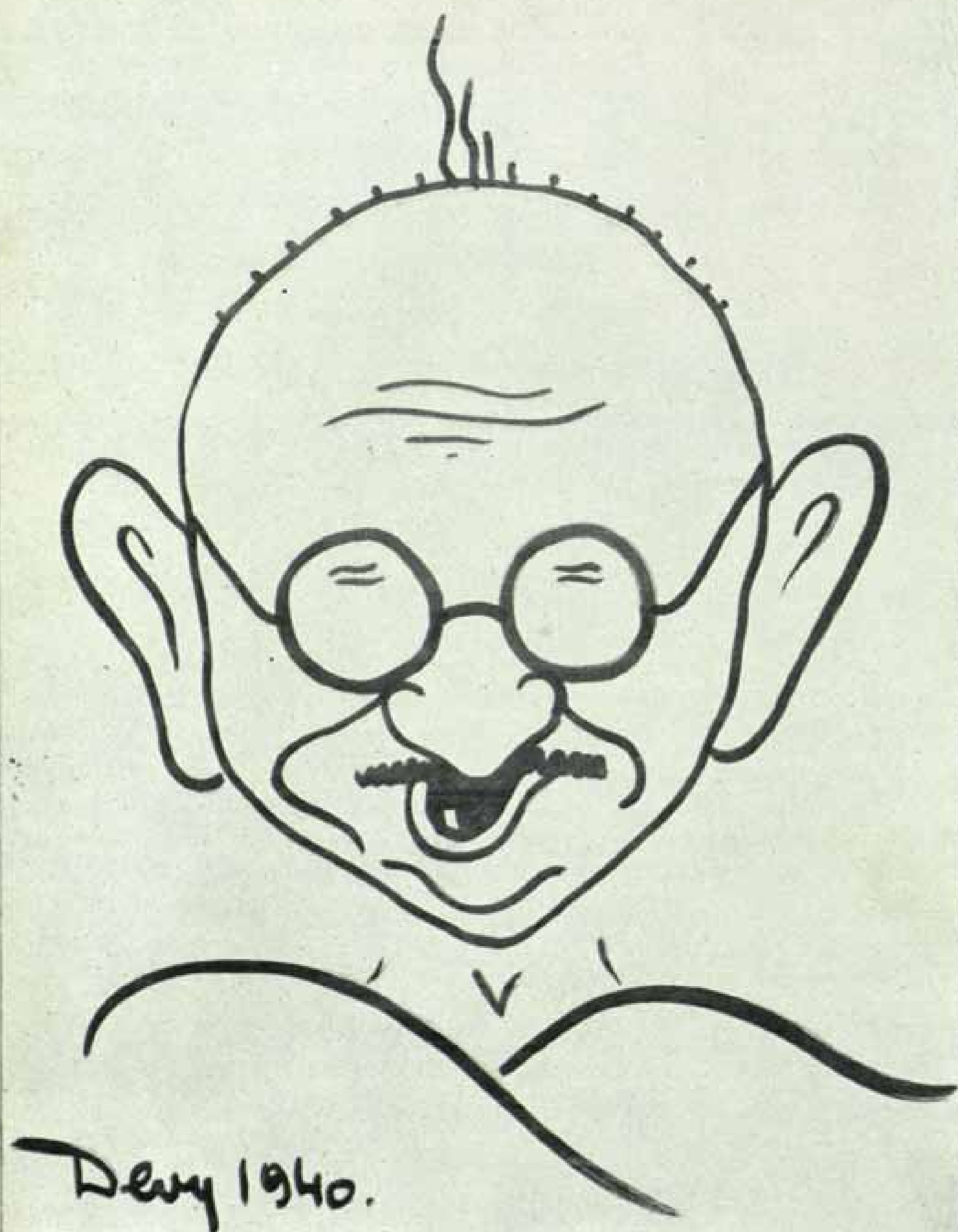
"It is worthy of the Khan Saheb and all that he had stood for during the past twenty years. He is a Pathan, and a Pathan may be said to be born with a rifle or sword in his hand. But the Khan Saheb deliberately asked his Khudai Khidmatgars to shed all the weapons, when he asked them to join the satyagraha against the Rowlatt Act. He saw that this deliberate giving up of the weapons of violence had a magical effect. It was the only remedy for the blood-feuds which were handed down from sire to son and which had become a part of the normal life of the Pathan. They had decimated numerous families, and non-violence seemed to the Khan Saheb to have come as a longed-for salvation. The violent blood feuds would otherwise have no end and would spell the end of the Pathans. He saw as clear as daylight that, if he could persuade his people not to retaliate, the suicidal feuds would cease and the Pathans would be able to give a better account of their bravery. They took up his message and put into practice what with them became non-violence of the brave.

"And being so clear about his own faith and that of the Khudai Khidmatgars, there was for him no escape from resignation of his membership of the Congress Working Committee. His continuing on it would have been anomalous and might have meant an end of his life's work. He could not ask his people to join as recruits in the army and at the same time forget the law of tribal retaliation. The simple Pathan would have argued with him—and the argument would have been irresistible—that the present war was a war



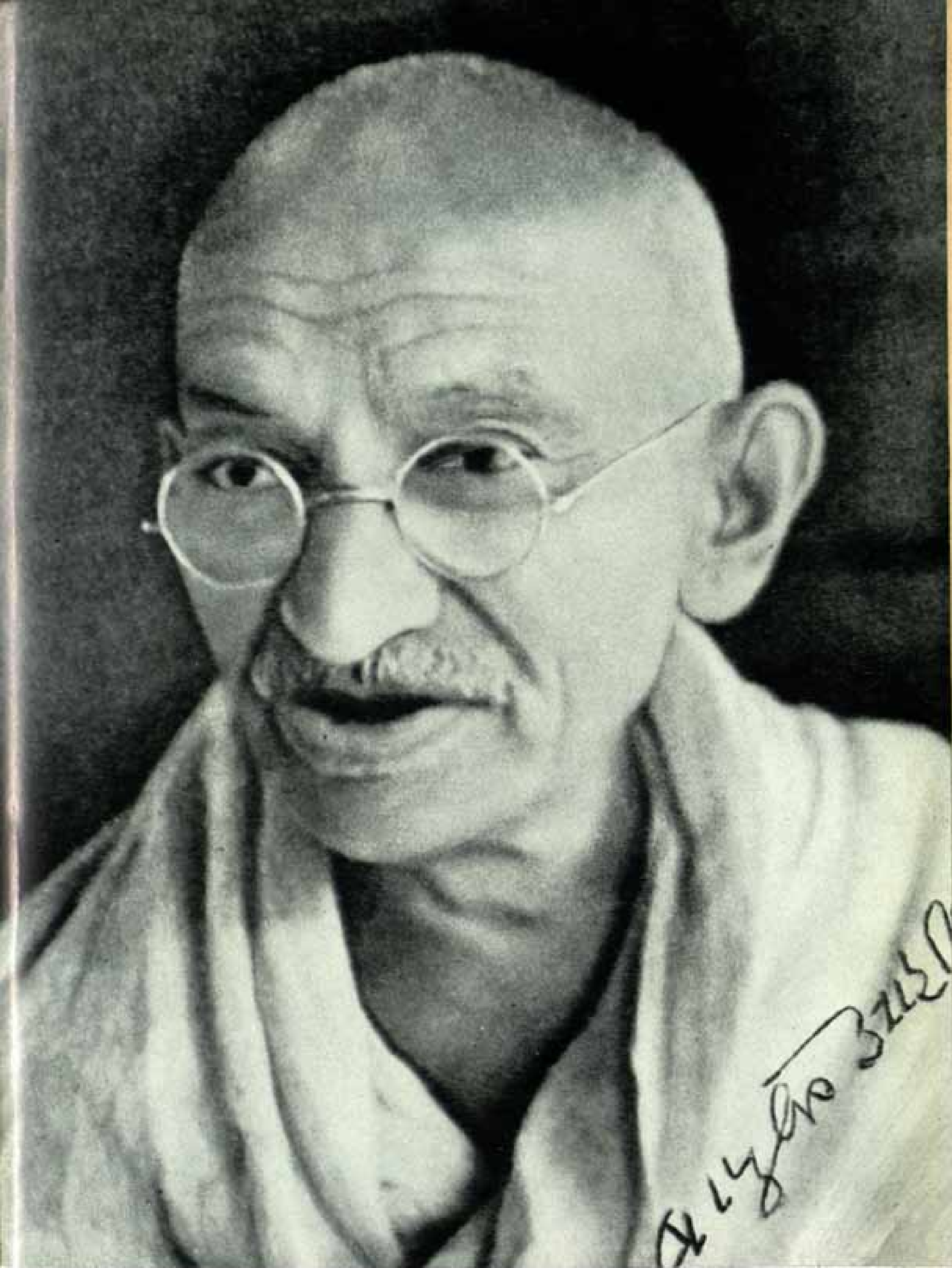
Photograph : Kanu Gandhi

Gandhi spinning with Dhanush Takli, Sevagram, 1940



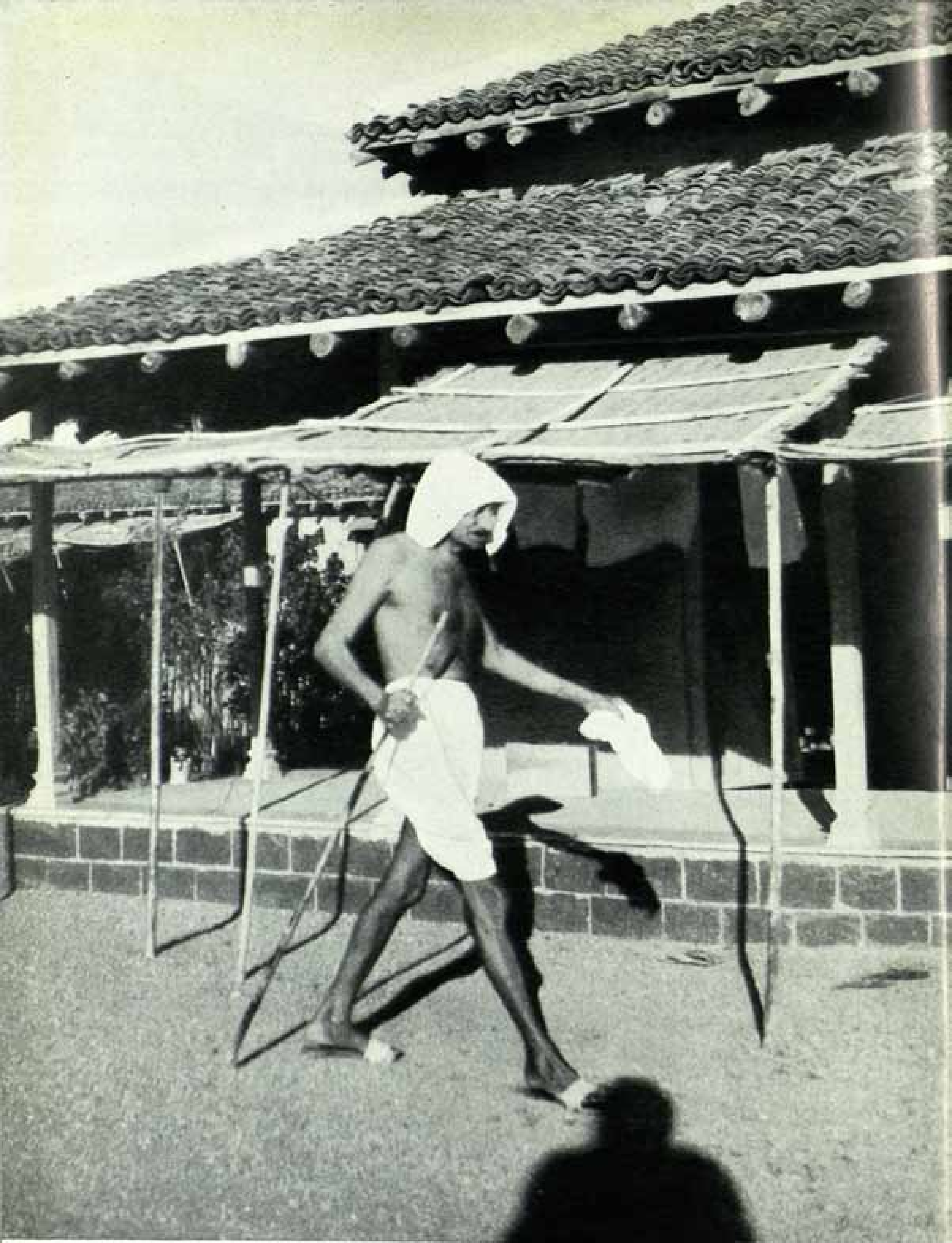
Courtesy : Chaitanyaprasad Diwanji

A caricature by Devy



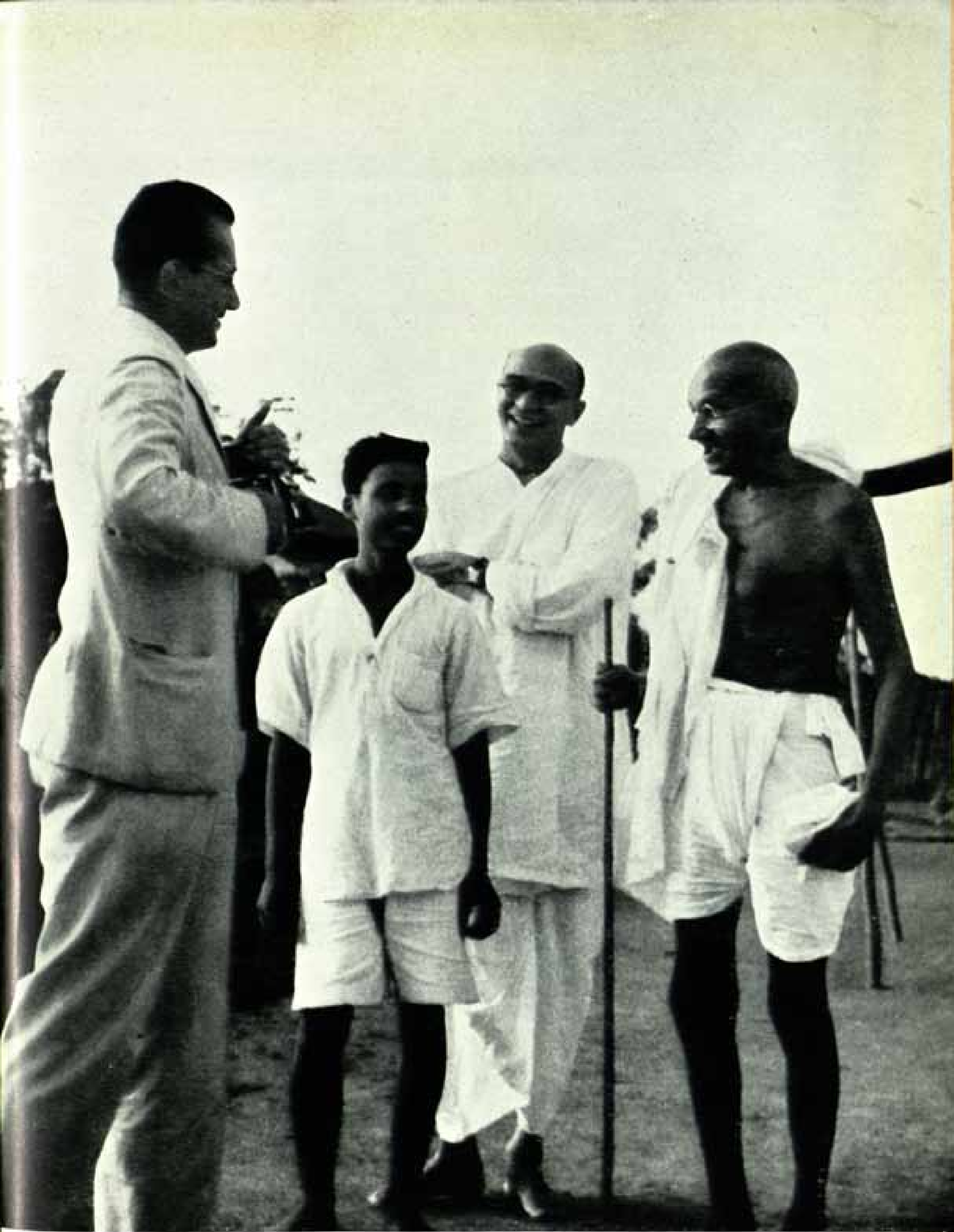
Photograph : Kanu Gandhi

Gandhi, Sevagram, 1940



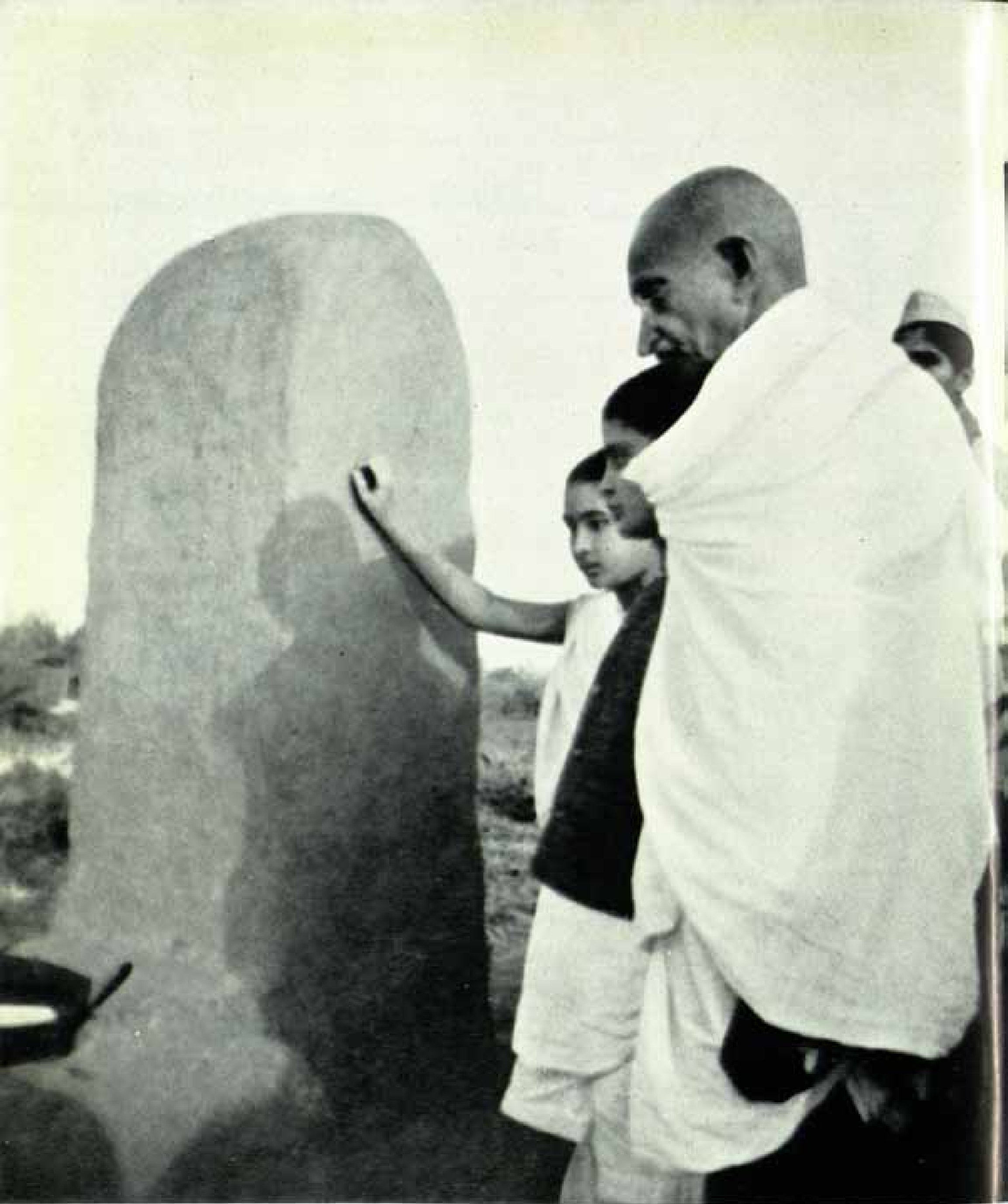
Photograph: Kanu Gandhi

On the ashram grounds, Sevagram, 1940



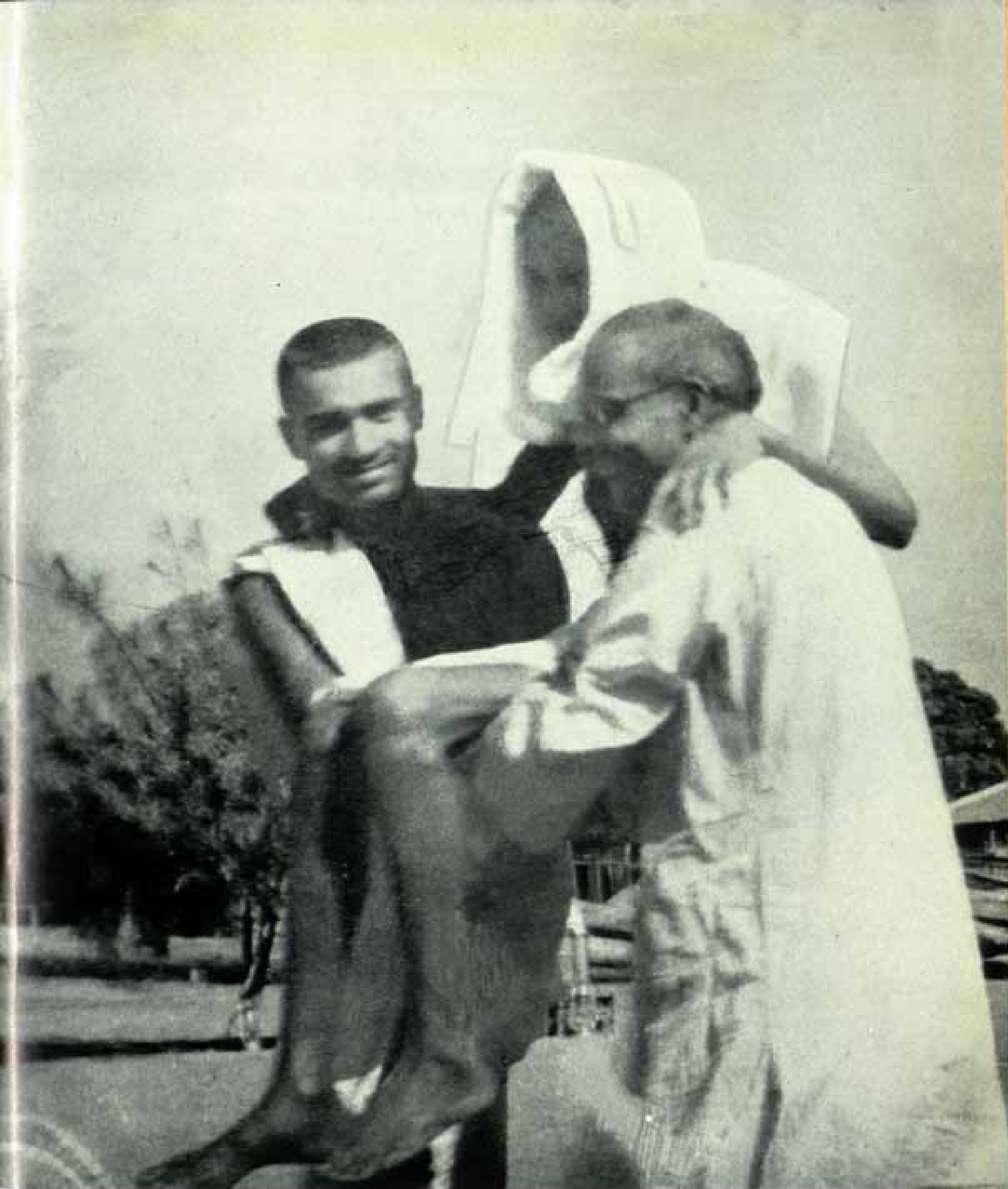
Photograph : Kanu Gandhi

With a foreign correspondent, Sevagram, 1940



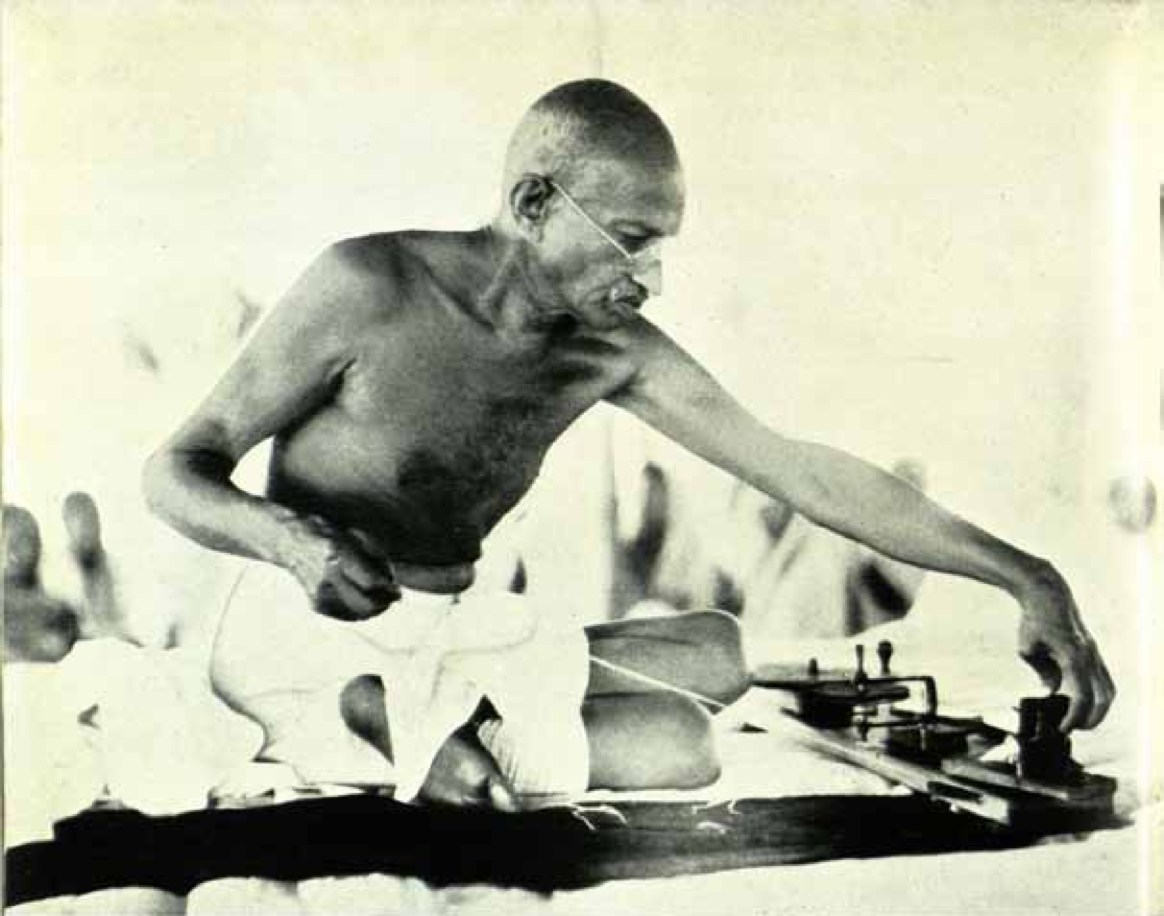
Photograph : Kanu Gandhi

Inspecting the manufacture of palm *gur*, Sevagram, 1940



Courtesy : Kanu Gandhi

During his illness, Sevagram, 1940



From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Spinning with Yeravda Chakra, 1940

of retaliation and revenge, and that there was no difference between it and their blood feuds.

"I don't know how far the Khan Saheb has succeeded in carrying his message to his own people. This I know that with him non-violence is a matter not of intellectual conviction but of intuitive faith. Nothing can, therefore, shake it. About his followers, he cannot say how far they will adhere to it. But that does not worry him. He has to do his duty which he owes to them. The result he leaves to God. He derives his ahimsa from the Holy Koran. He is a devout Muslim. During his stay with me for over a year I never saw him miss his *namaz* or his Ramzan fast, except when he was ill. But his devotion to Islam does not mean disrespect for other faiths. He has read the Gita. His reading is slight but selective, and he immediately assimilates what appeals to him. He loathes long argument and does not take long to make up his mind. If he succeeds in his mission, it would mean the solution of many another problem. But the result no one can predict.

"'The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord.'"

In the same issue of *Harijan*, Gandhi wrote on the "Best Field for Ahimsa":

"This is the family field, in a wider sense than the ordinary. Thus the members of an institution should be regarded as a family. Non-violence as between the members of such families should be easy to practise. If that fails, it means that we have not developed the capacity for pure non-violence. For, the love we have to practise towards our relatives or colleagues in our family or institution, we have to practise towards our foes, dacoits, etc. If we fail in one case, success in the other is a chimera.

"We have generally assumed that, though it may not be possible to exercise non-violence in the domestic field, it is possible to do so in the political field. This has proved a pure delusion. We have chosen to describe our methods adopted so far as non-violence, and thus caricatured non-violence itself. If non-violence it was, it was such poor stuff that it proved useless at the critical moment. The alphabet of ahimsa is best learnt in domestic school, and I can say from experience that, if we secure success there, we are sure to do so everywhere else. For a non-violent person, the whole world is one family. He will thus fear none, nor will others fear him.

"It will be retorted that those who satisfy such a test of non-violence will be few and far between. It is quite likely, but that is no reply to my proposition. Those who profess to believe in non-violence should know the implications of that belief. And if these scare them away, they are welcome to give up the belief. Now that the Congress Working Committee has made the position clear, it is necessary that those who claim to believe in non-violence should know what is expected of them. If, as a result, the ranks of non-violent army thin down, it should not matter. An army, however small, of truly non-violent soldiers is likely some day to multiply itself. An army of those who are not truly non-violent is never likely to yield any use, whether it increases or decreases.

"Let no one understand from the foregoing, that a non-violent army is open only to those who strictly enforce in their lives all the implications and make an ever-increasing endeavour to observe them. There never will be an army of perfectly non-violent people. It will be formed of those who will honestly endeavour to observe non-violence. For the last fifty years, I have striven to make my life increasingly non-violent and to inspire my co-workers in the same direction, and I think I have had a fair amount of success. The growing darkness around, far from damping my zeal and dimming my faith, brightens them, and makes the implications of non-violence more clearly visible to me."

"You have failed to take even your son with you," wrote a correspondent. "May it not, therefore, be well for you to rest content with putting your own house in order?"

"This may be taken to be a taunt," replied Gandhi, "but I do not take it so. For the question had occurred to me, before it did to anyone else. I am a believer in previous births and rebirths. All our relationships are the result of the *samskars* we carry from our previous births. God's law are inscrutable and are the subject of endless search. No one will fathom them.

"This is how I regard the case of my son. I regard the birth of a bad son to me as the result of my evil past, whether of this life or previous. My first son was born, when I was in a state of infatuation. Besides, he grew up whilst I was myself growing and whilst I knew myself very little. I do not claim to know myself fully even today, but I certainly know myself better than I did then. For years he remained away from me, and his upbringing was not entirely

in my hands. That is why, he has always been at a loose end. His grievance against me has always been that I sacrificed him and his brothers at the altar of what I wrongly believed to be the public good. My other sons have laid more or less the same blame at my door, but with a good deal of hesitation, and they have generously forgiven me. My eldest son was the direct victim of my experiments —radical changes in my life—and so, he cannot forget what he regards as my blunders. Under the circumstances, I believe I am myself the cause of the loss of my son, and have, therefore, learnt patiently to bear it. And yet, it is not quite correct to say that I have lost him. For, it is my constant prayer that God may make him see the error of his ways and forgive me my shortcomings, if any, in serving him. It is my firm faith that man is by nature going higher, and so I have not at all lost the hope that some day, he will wake up from his slumber of ignorance. Thus, he is part of my field of the experiments in non-violence. When, or whether, I shall succeed, I have never bothered to know. It is enough for my satisfaction that I do not slacken my efforts in doing what I know to be my duty."

"What is the good of your crying 'ahimsa' in season and out of season?" asked a correspondent. "Will it by itself teach people to be non-violent? Would it not be better, instead, to tell people how pure ahimsa or the ahimsa of the strong can be cultivated?"

Gandhi replied: "I have attempted before this on more occasions than one to answer it. But my effort has, I confess, been rather desultory. I have not concentrated upon it, giving it the weight I might have. This was all right while I was devoting all my energy to forging the means to give battle to the Government. But it had the result of retarding the growth of pure non-violence, so that to-day, we are not even within ken of the non-violence of the strong. If we now want to advance further, we ought, at least for some time, to completely forget the idea of offering non-violent resistance to the constituted authority. If non-violence in the domestic field is successfully achieved, we shall surely see the non-violence against the constituted authority revived in its purified form, and it will be irresistible.

"And now that I am no longer in the Congress, I may not offer civil disobedience even in my own person in its name. But, I am certainly free to offer civil disobedience in my individual capacity,

whenever it may be necessary to offer. No one need suppose that all civil disobedience will necessarily be taboo while the country is still being educated in the ahimsa of the strong. But those who may want to join the non-violent force of my conception, should not entertain any immediate prospect of civil disobedience. They should understand that, so long as they have not realized ahimsa in their own person in its pure form, there can be no civil disobedience for them.

"Let not the mention of pure ahimsa frighten anybody. If we have a clear conception of it and have a living faith in its matchless efficacy, it will not be found to be so hard to practice, as it is sometimes supposed to be. It will be well to remember the immortal Mahabharata verse in this connection. The seer poet therein proclaims loudly to the whole world that *dharma* includes within itself both legitimate *artha* and *kama*, and asks why men do not follow the royal road of *dharma* that leads to both earthly and spiritual bliss. *Dharma* here does not signify the mere observance of the externals. It signifies the way of truth and non-violence. The scriptures have given us two immortal maxims. One of these is this: 'Ahimsa is the supreme law or *dharma*.' And the other is: 'There is no other law or *dharma* than truth.' These two maxims provide us the key to all lawful *artha* and *kama*. Why should we then hesitate to act up to them? Strange as it may appear, the fact remains that people find the easiest of things oftentimes to be the most difficult to follow. The reason, to borrow a term from the science of physics, lies in our inertia. The physicists tell us that inertia is an essential and, in its own place, the most useful quality of matter. It is that alone which steadies the universe and prevents it from flying off at a tangent. But for it, the latter would be a chaos of motion. Inertia becomes an incubus and a vice when it ties the mind down to old ruts. It is this kind of inertia which is responsible for our rooted prejudice that to practise pure ahimsa is difficult. It is up to us to get rid of this incubus. The first step in this direction is firmly to resolve that all untruth and *himsa* shall hereafter be taboo to us, whatever sacrifice it might seem to involve. For, the good these may seem to achieve is in appearance only, but in reality it is deadly poison. If our resolve is firm and our conviction clear, it would mean half the battle won, and the practice of these two qualities would come comparatively easy to us.

"Let us confine ourselves to ahimsa. We have all along regarded the spinning wheel, the village crafts, etc., as the pillars of ahimsa, and so indeed they are. They must stand. But we have now to go a step further. A votary of ahimsa will, of course, base upon non-violence, if he has not already done so, all his relations with his parents, his children, his wife, his servants and his dependents, etc. But the real test will come at the time of the political or communal disturbances or under the menace of thieves and dacoits. Mere resolve to lay down one's life under the circumstances is not enough. There must be the necessary qualification for making the sacrifice. If I am a Hindu, I must fraternize with the Musalmans and the rest. In my dealings with them, I may not make any distinction between my co-religionists and those who might belong to a different faith. I would seek opportunities to serve them without any feeling of fear or unnaturalness. The word 'fear' can have no place in the dictionary of ahimsa. Having thus qualified himself by his selfless service, a votary of pure ahimsa will be in a position to make a fit offering of himself in a communal conflagration. Similarly, to meet the menace of thieves and dacoits, he will need to go among and cultivate friendly relations with the communities from which thieves and dacoits generally come."

"You have appealed to Britons to lay down arms and to adopt non-violence," complained another correspondent. "But that raises a moral difficulty. *A*'s ahimsa provokes *B* to *himsa* and makes him impervious to appeal to his heart. If a non-violent man comes up against an inanimate thing, his non-violence will have no effect on it. There is, therefore, some flaw somewhere in your belief. It is likely that ahimsa may have success in a restricted claim, therefore, of its universal use falls to the ground."

"Ahimsa cannot be dismissed so lightly as you think," explained Gandhi. "Ahimsa is the strongest force known. But if all can use the strongest force with equal ease, it would lose its importance. We have not been able yet to discover the true measure of the innumerable properties of an article of our daily use like water. Some of its properties fill us with wonder. Let us not, therefore, make light of a force of the subtlest kind like ahimsa, and let us try to discover its hidden power with patience and faith. Within a brief space of time, we have carried to a fairly successful conclusion a great experiment in the use of this force. As you know, I have not

set much store by it. But, according to the legend, as Rama's name was enough to float stones, even so the movement carried on in the name of ahimsa brought about a great awakening in the country and carried us ahead. It is difficult to forecast the possibilities when men with unflinching faith carry this experiment further forward. To say that those who use violence are all insensible is an exaggeration. Some do seem to lose their senses, but we are bound to be mistaken, if we try to base a moral law on those exceptions. The safest course is to lay down laws on the strength of our usual experience, and our usual experience is that in most cases non-violence is the real antidote of violence, and it is safe to infer from it that the highest violence can be met by the highest non-violence.

"But let us consider for a moment the inanimate objects. He will surely break his head, who strikes it against a stone. But supposing a stone comes against us through space, we can escape it by stepping aside, or if there is nowhere to step aside, we can bravely stay where we are and receive the stone. That will mean minimum injury and, in case it proves fatal, the death will not be as painful as it would be, if we made an effort to ward it off.

"Extend the thought a little further, and it is easy to see that, if a senseless man is left alone and no one tries to resist him, he is sure to exhaust himself. Indeed, it is not quite inconceivable that the loving sacrifice of many may bring an insane man to his senses. Instances are not wanting of absolutely insane people having come back to their senses."

The non-violence propounded by him was not wholly acceptable to the majority of Congressmen. The Gujarat Provincial Congress Committee presided over by Sardar Patel in mid-July was in favour of the Working Committee resolution passed at Delhi.

"All honour to the Sardar and others for holding fast by their conviction," said Gandhi. "My way is clear before me. But what of those who have followed the Sardar and me in the belief that we are always of one mind? They are in a difficult situation. If their ahimsa is not part of their being but only a reflection of mine, it is their duty to follow the Sardar. I have do doubt that the Sardar has gone off the track, or rather that it is beyond his capacity to go my way. The Sardar has chosen a different path with my consent, nay, encouragement. Therefore, those who are in doubt should follow the Sardar. I believe the Sardar will see his error and come

to the way he has abandoned, when he discovers in himself the capacity that he feels he has not. When that happy moment arrives, if it does, the rest also will come back to me with the Sardar. That is the safest way for them."

"But those who have no doubt about their course," he added, "those who have assimilated ahimsa and those for whom ahimsa is the only way out of all difficulties, should quietly retire from the Congress and bury themselves in various non-violent activities. If they are truly non-violent, they will prevent a split in the Congress. Their retirement makes any split out of the question. But, even after retiring they will not come in conflict with the Congress. They will give the Sardar any help that he summons for non-violent activities and they will try to lay down their lives wherever there is an occasion to do so in the event of internal disturbances.

"If it is possible to form small bands of satyagrahis after my pattern, it is, of course, desirable. They should be able not only to keep the flag of ahimsa flying, but they should also be able to convert Congressmen by their steadfastness and their success. For there are many Congressmen who desire that ahimsa should be the rule of life in all fields, only they doubt its practicability. It is my duty, and that of those who think with me, to dispel this doubt by successful application of ahimsa in the new field."

The A.-I.C.C. at Poona held at the end of July ratified by ninety-five votes to forty-seven the resolution passed by the Working Committee at Delhi. The resolution explained how while the Congress must continue to adhere strictly to the principle of non-violence in the struggle for independence, it was unable in the present circumstances to declare that the principle should be extended to India's national defence. Gandhi was not even present in Poona this time to tender his advice. Four members of the Working Committee, Rajendra Prasad, Kripalani, Dr. P. C. Ghosh and Shankarrao Deo, kept neutral as they wanted to go whole hog with the Gandhian ideology. Seven amendments were moved in the course of the debate by the leftists, who argued that the resolution attempted to pursue a policy of "surrender to imperialism". All the amendments were either withdrawn or rejected. It was emphasized by Nehru in the course of the debate that there must be a strict and brief time-limit to the offer contained in the resolution after the expiration of which the offer should relapse.

"There is not a soul in the Congress," observed President Azad, "who is not anxious to go the whole length with Mahatma Gandhi, if he can help it; but we cannot close our eyes to hard facts. We had not the courage to declare that we shall organize a state in this country without an armed force. If we did, it would be wrong on our part. Mahatma Gandhi has to give the message of non-violence to the whole world and, therefore, it is his duty to propagate it, but we have to consider our position as the representatives of the Indian nation meeting in the Indian National Congress. The Congress is a political organization, pledged to win the political independence of the country. It is not an institution for organizing world peace. Honestly, we cannot go as far as Mahatma Gandhi wants us to go. We admit that it is a weakness on our part, but it is a weakness which we share with the entire humanity. We have to solve every difficulty that presents itself to us, and we have also to recognize the hard fact of Mahatma Gandhi's separation from the Congress. We must bear it bravely."

Mr. Amery described the situation in India to be satisfactory. Gandhi promptly retorted: "The opposition on the part of so many members of the A.-I.C.C. to the ratification of the Delhi resolution is, as the Maulana Saheb said, a sign of their resentment at the feeling that the Congress High Command was letting the British Government to get the better of the Congress. If that suspicion is proved to be well-grounded, nothing on earth can possibly deter me from adopting some form of effective satyagraha. But, it is my prayer and corresponding effort to prevent it until the clouds lift from Great Britain. I do not want Britain's humiliation in order to gain India's freedom. Such freedom, if it were attainable, cannot be manfully handled."

"If I retired from the Congress at Bombay in 1934," he observed addressing the Congressmen, "I did so to render greater service. The events have justified the retirement. The present isolation too has the same motive behind it. So far as I can judge the immediate future, satyagraha, if it comes, will be confined only to those whom I may select. The rest will be expected not to interfere with the course I may adopt. All will render very substantial help, if they will carry out the instructions that may be issued for them. One permanent instruction is: Leave the Congress if you do not believe in truth and non-violence, the latter in the restricted sense now given

to it by the recent resolution. If this elementary requirement is not fulfilled, any satyagraha that I may lead will be of no avail to the Congress. It will merely satisfy my satyagrahi soul."

On August 5, Gandhi wrote:

"Those who regard themselves as out-and-out votaries of non-violence and believe the step taken by Rajaji and others to be wrong have to pass through a severe test. I have expressed my opinion in the clearest possible language. I believe that Rajaji has gone off the track. Rajaji believes that I have. The future alone will decide who is right.

"But as I have not the slightest doubt about the correctness of my position, I have not hesitated to advise those who think with me to leave the Congress. But this does not mean that they have to do so forthwith. It is enough, if they are ready to retire when I decide upon the date. Before the actual step is taken, we shall have to make sure of certain things. Their retirement must be such as to cause no shock to fellow Congressmen. If they do not appreciate the step, I have to explain it to them patiently, and to convince them that it is in the interest of the Congress that it should be taken. It is common cause between them and us that it would be an ideal thing if we could protect the country against foreign aggression by non-violence. It is, therefore, desirable that there should be a group of people pledged to devote their lives to proving the efficacy of non-violence. If the existence of such a group is good for the country, it is apparent that they should remain outside the Congress, and that the Congress should not only tolerate them but welcome them, render them as much help as possible, and regard them as their own. That means that far from there being any estrangement or misunderstanding between the Congress and this group, their relations should, if possible, be sweeter than before.

"But to bring about this happy consummation, the out-and-out votaries of non-violence should not even mentally find fault with their erstwhile comrades. They may not remind them of their previous statements. It is their duty to revise their statements, if they feel that they were erroneous, and it is possible that they may not read in them the same implications as the others discover in them. The best thing, therefore, is to bear joyously with one another. This mutual tolerance presupposes their choosing different spheres of action and working in co-operation wherever possible.

"It will be some time before we can create such an atmosphere, but we are sure to succeed if we make a serious endeavour in this direction. In the meanwhile, let everyone occupy himself with the constructive activities."

"The constructive programme," he said, "is a big undertaking including a number of items: (1) Hindu-Muslim or communal unity; (2) Removal of untouchability; (3) Prohibition; (4) Khadi; (5) Other village industries; (6) Village sanitation; (7) New or basic education; (8) Adult education; (9) Uplift of women; (10) Education in hygiene and health; (11) Propagation of *rashtrabhasha*; (12) Cultivating love of one's own language; (13) Working for economic equality. This list can be supplemented, if necessary, but it is so comprehensive that I think it can be proved to include items appearing to have been omitted."

A few members of the A.-I.C.C. who were out-and-out believers in non-violence visited Sevagram in the first week of August. Some had remained neutral on the Delhi resolution, some had opposed it. What was the right attitude? What were they to do next?

"You must now carefully follow what I am writing from week to week," said Gandhi. "You must be absolutely sure that you are out-and-out believers in non-violence. Can your ahimsa stand the test? Rehearse to yourselves what you would do in case of a riot? Those who have differed from us are no cowards. If they say that they cannot do without an army and police, they deserve a respectful hearing. I myself do not know what I should do in a difficult situation. You know that I have capitulated on the question of the desirability of maintaining a police force. But what I can say is that I shall hope to behave non-violently, should the occasion arise. I should not like to die before my death. I do not want to prepare India for military defence from today. We should never forget that we are not the whole of India. The Congress is without doubt a powerful organization, but the Congress is not the whole of India. The Congress may not have an army, but those who do not believe in non-violence will. And if the Congress too surrenders, there is no one to represent the no-army mentality. This was my argument in a nutshell. But I failed to carry conviction. Therefore, I must find fault not with my comrades but with myself. There must be some weakness in my argument, and so I must prepare myself to carry conviction to those who differ from me."

"But," he went on, "I have digressed. What you and I have to do is to show our ahimsa when there is rioting or similar disturbance. If every one of us, wherever he is, begins doing so, there will come into being a non-violent army. Even the limited non-violence that all are subscribing to would not have come into being, if we had seen no successful demonstrations of it. So we have to hold on to our faith, even if when the time comes we may fail. There is no use arguing with the comrades who have differed from us, I hope, only temporarily. The question is one of demonstrating the truth in us, and we will not do it, unless we show that we have no malice, no bitterness and no inclination to find faults. We have to prepare ourselves for the terrible ordeal. The testing time may come sooner than we imagine. I am sailing on an uncharted sea. I have no cut and dry programme, and I am brooding from moment to moment. In the meanwhile, follow my weekly writings and carry out the constructive programme. The time for resignation is not yet. We must not be misunderstood."

"But," said a worker, "you have asked us to retire immediately, and all of us are ready."

"Your readiness is good, and it is enough for me for the time being. If you conscientiously voted against the Delhi resolution, you did nothing wrong; if you remained neutral, you did nothing wrong. You would have been wrong, if you had joined hands with those who sought to defeat the resolution on any but the ground of non-violence. For having given your vote on the Wardha resolution and having lost, you could not vote against the Delhi resolution which was the natural corollary of the Wardha resolution."

"But," said one of them, "I disliked the Wardha resolution and wanted to resign at once."

"You might have done so," he said "Then you would have been within your rights. But to do so now might savour of violence and self-righteousness. You must remember that I waited for more than a year before taking the final step, and then too I took it with the full approval of the friends of the Working Committee."

Soon followed more Congress workers, accompanied by Mr. B. G. Kher, the ex-Premier of Bombay. The first question was about the limits and the implications of non-violence and the extent of its application. Should one stop with the human species or extend it to all creation?

Gandhi said: "I was not prepared for this question. For the Congress, ahimsa is naturally confined to the political field and, therefore, only to the human species. Hence out-and-out non-violence means for our purpose every variety of non-violence on the political field. In concrete terms it covers family relations, relations with constituted authority, internal disorders and external aggression. Put in another way it covers all human relations."

"Then what about meat eating and egg eating? Do they consist with non-violence?"

"They do. Otherwise, we should have to exclude the Musalmans and Christians and a vast number of Hindus as possible co-workers in ahimsa. I have known many meat eaters to be far more non-violent than vegetarians."

"But, if we had to give them up for the sake of a principle?"

"Oh yes, we would, if we had to compromise our principle. Our principle is defined as I have shown already."

"If, as you have said, the Polish resistance to the German invasion was almost non-violent, and you would thus seem to reconcile yourself with it, why do you object to the Wardha resolution of the Working Committee?"

"Surely," replied Gandhi, "there is no analogy between the two cases. If a man fights with his sword single-handed against a horde of dacoits armed to the teeth, I should say that he is fighting almost non-violently. Have I not said to our women that if in defence of their honour they used their nails and their teeth and even a dagger, I should regard their conduct non-violent? She does not know the distinction between the *himsa* and ahimsa. She acts spontaneously. Supposing a mouse in fighting a cat tried to resist the cat with his sharp beak, would you call that mouse violent? In the same way, for the Poles to stand violently against the German hordes, vastly superior in numbers, military equipment and strength, was almost non-violence. I should not mind repeating that statement over and over again. You must give its full value to the word 'almost'. But we are four hundred millions here. If we were to organize a big army and prepare ourselves to fight foreign aggression, how could we by any stretch of imagination call ourselves almost non-violent, let alone non-violent? The Poles were unprepared for the way in which the enemy swooped down upon them. When we talked of war preparation, we contemplate preparation to meet any violent

combination with our superior violence. If India ever prepared herself that way, she would constitute the greatest menace to world peace. For, if we take that path, we will also have to choose the path of exploitation like the European nations. That is why I still regret the moment when my words lacked the power of convincing the Sardar and Rajaji. By having passed that resolution, we proclaimed to the world that the ahimsa we had subscribed to all these years was not really ahimsa but a form of *himsa*."

"How would you run your administration non-violently?"

Gandhi said: "If we assume that we would have won independence by non-violent means, it means that the bulk of the country had been organized non-violently. For, without the vast majority of the people having become non-violent, we could not attain non-violent swaraj. If, therefore, we attain swaraj by purely non-violent means, it should not be difficult for us to carry on the administration without the military. The goondas too then will have come under our control. If, for instance, in Sevagram, we have five or seven goondas in the population of seven hundred who are non-violently organized, the five or seven will either live under the discipline of the rest or leave the village.

"But you will see that I am answering the question with the utmost caution, and my truth makes me admit that we might have to maintain a police force. But the police will be after our pattern. As we shall have adult suffrage, the voice of even the youngest of us will count. And that is why I have said, that the ideally non-violent state will be an ordered anarchy. That state will be the best governed which is governed the least. The pity is that no one trusts me with the reins of government! Otherwise, I would show how to govern non-violently. If I maintain a police force, it will be a body of reformers."

"But," someone said, "you had the power in the Congress."

"That was a paper boat," said Gandhi. "And then you must not forget that I never spared the Congress ministries. Shri Munshi and Pantji came in for a lot of strictures from me. As I have said in another connection that even the dirty water from the gutter, when it mixes with the water of the Ganges, becomes as pure as the Ganges water; even so, I had expected even the goondas would work under the Congress discipline. But evidently, our ministers had not attained the purifying potency of the fabled Ganges."

"But," interjected Mr. Kher, "the Congress ministers had no non-violent power with them. Even if five hundred goondas had run amuck and had been allowed to go unchecked, they would have dealt untold havoc. I do not know how even you would have dealt with them."

"Surely, surely," said Gandhi, "I had rehearsed such situations. The ministers could on such occasions have gone out and allowed themselves to be done to death by the goondas. But let us face the fact that we had not the requisite ahimsa. We went in with our half-baked ahimsa. I do not mind it, inasmuch as we gave up the power the moment we felt we should give it up. I am sure that, if we had adhered to strictest non-violence during these two or three years, the Congress would have made a tremendous advance in the direction of ahimsa and also independence."

"But," said Mr. Kher, "four or five years ago, when there was a riot and I appealed to the leaders to go and throw themselves into the conflagration, no one was ready."

"You are supporting my argument. You agree that our loyalty to ahimsa was lip-loyalty. And if even the half-baked ahimsa carried us a long way, does it not follow that thorough ahimsa would have carried us very far, indeed, even if it had not already brought us to the goal?"

"We cannot visualize how you will stand non-violently against a foreign invasion."

"I cannot draw the whole picture to you, because we have no past experience to fall back upon and there is no reality facing us today. We have the Government army manned by the Sikhs, the Pathans and the Gurkhas. What I conceive is this, that with my non-violent army of, say, two thousand people, I should put myself between the two contending armies. But this, I know, is no answer. I can only say that we shall be able to reduce the violence of the invader to a minimum."

"One might admit in theory," wrote one correspondent, "non-violence is an infallible weapon, and that no power on earth can be a match for the man who has achieved non-violence to the fullest extent. But is this possible?"

Gandhi replied: "The correspondent doubts in substance the universal application of ahimsa, and asserts that society has made little progress towards it. Teachers like Buddha arose and made some

effort with some little success perhaps in their lifetime, but society is just where it was in spite of them. Ahimsa may be good enough to be the duty of an individual; for society it is good for nothing and India too will have to take to violence for her freedom.

"The argument is, I think, fundamentally wrong. The last statement is incorrect, inasmuch as the Congress has adhered to non-violence as the means for the attainment of swaraj. It has indeed gone a step further. The question having been raised as to whether non-violence continues to be the weapon against all internal disturbances, the A.-I.C.C. clearly gave the answer in the affirmative. It is only for protection against outside aggression that the Congress has maintained that it would be necessary to have an army. And then, even on this matter, there was a considerable body of the members of the A.-I.C.C. who voted against the resolution. This dissent has got to be reckoned with, when the question voted upon is one of principle. The Congress policy must always be decided by a majority vote, but it does not cancel the minority vote. It stands. Where there is no principle involved and there is a programme to be carried out, the minority has got to follow the majority. But where there is a principle involved, the dissent stands, and it is bound to express itself in practice when the occasion arises. That means that ahimsa for occasions and all purposes has been recognized by a society, however small it may be, and that ahimsa as a remedy to be used by society has made fair strides. Whether it will make further strides or no is a different matter. The Working Committee's resolution, therefore, fails to lend any support to the correspondent's doubts. On the contrary, it should in a certain degree dispel them.

"Now for the argument that I am but a rare individual and that what little society has done in the matter of ahimsa is due to my influence, and that it is sure to disappear with me. This is not right. The Congress has a number of leaders who can think for themselves. Maulana Azad is a great thinker of keen intellect and vast reading. Few can equal him in his Arabic and his Persian scholarship. Experience has taught him that ahimsa alone can make India free. It was he who insisted on the resolution accepting ahimsa as a weapon against internal disturbances. Pandit Jawaharlal is not a man to stand in awe of anyone. His study of history and of contemporary events is second to none. It is after mature thought that he has

accepted ahimsa as a means for the attainment of swaraj. It is true that he has said that he would not hesitate to accept swaraj if non-violence failed and it could be won by means of violence. But that is not relevant to the present issue. There are not a few other big names in the Congress who believe in non-violence as the only weapon at least for the attainment of swaraj. To think that all of them will give up the way of ahimsa as soon as I am gone, is to insult them and to insult human nature. We must believe that everyone can think for himself. Mutual respect to that extent is essential for progress. By crediting our companions with independent judgement we strengthen them and make it easy for them to be independent-minded even if they are proved to be weak.

"I hope that neither the correspondent nor anyone else believes that the Congress or many Congress leaders have bidden good-bye to ahimsa. To the limited extent, that I have pointed out, faith in ahimsa has been reiterated and made clear beyond any doubt by the Congress. I agree that the limit laid down by the Congress considerably narrows down the sphere of ahimsa and dims its splendour. But the limited ahimsa of the Congress is good enough for the purpose of our present argument. For, I am trying to make out that the field of ahimsa is widening, and the limited acceptance of ahimsa by the Congress sufficiently supports my position.

"If we turn our eyes to the time of which history has any record down to our own time, we shall find that man has been steadily progressing towards ahimsa. Our remote ancestors were cannibals. Then came a time, when they were fed up with cannibalism and began to live on chase. Next came a stage when man was ashamed of leading the life of a wandering hunter. He, therefore, took to agriculture and depended principally on mother earth for his food. Thus from being a nomad, he settled down to civilized stable life, founded villages and towns, and from member of a family he became member of a community and a nation. All these are signs of progressive ahimsa and diminishing *himsa*. Had it been otherwise, the human species should have been extinct by now, even as many of the lower species have disappeared.

"The prophets and *avatars* have also taught the lesson of ahimsa more or less. Not one of them has professed to teach *himsa*. And how should it be otherwise? *Himsa* does not need to be taught. Man as animal is violent, but as spirit is non-violent. The moment

he awakes to the spirit within he cannot remain violent. Either he progresses towards ahimsa or he rushes to his doom. That is why, the prophets and *avatars* have taught the lessons of truth, harmony, brotherhood, justice—all attributes of ahimsa.

"And yet violence seems to persist, even to the extent of thinking people like the correspondent regarding it as the final weapon. But as I have shown history and experience are against him.

"If we believe that the mankind has steadily progressed towards ahimsa, it follows that it has to progress towards it still further. Nothing in this world is static, everything is kinetic. If there is no progression, then there is inevitable retrogression. No one can remain without the eternal cycle, unless it be God Himself.

"The present war is the saturation point in violence. It spells to my mind also its doom. Daily, I have testimony of the fact that ahimsa was never before appreciated by mankind as it is today. All the testimony from the West that I continue to receive points in the same direction. The Congress has pledged itself to ahimsa however limited. I invite the correspondent and doubters like him to shed their doubts and plunge confidently into the sacred sacrificial fire of ahimsa. Then I have little doubt that the Congress will retrace its step. 'It is always willing.' Well has Pritam, our poet, sung: 'Happiest are those that plunge in the fire, the lookers-on are all but scorched by flames.' "

Right Of Free Speech

1940

THE BRITISH Government had been considering a new move. The Viceroy's statement of August 8, 1940, commonly referred to as the August Offer, said that the new constitution should be "primarily the responsibility of Indians themselves". There were two provisos: the British obligations must be fulfilled and the minority opinions must not be overridden. "It goes without saying that they could not contemplate the transfer of their present responsibilities for the peace and the welfare of India to any system of government whose authority is directly denied by the large and powerful elements in India's national life. Nor could they be parties to the coercion of such elements into submission to such a government."

The constitutional issues, the statement continued, could not be decided at "a moment when the Commonwealth is engaged in a struggle for existence", but after the war, a representative Indian constitution-making body would be set up and Indian proposals as to its form and operation would at any time be welcome. Meanwhile, the decision to enlarge the Central Executive Council and to establish an Advisory War Council would be brought into effect. It was hoped that all parties and communities would co-operate in India's war effort and thus pave the way for her attainment of free and equal partnership in the British Commonwealth.

The reaction of the Congress to the offer was outspoken. Azad refused Lord Linlithgow's invitation even to discuss it. The Congress President held the view that there was no scope for further discussion. The whole conception of dominion status for India, stated Nehru, was "as dead as a door-nail". Rajagopalachari was "angry" with the statement.

The reaction of the Muslim League was different. The statement was interpreted to mean, "no future constitution, interim or final" would be adopted without the League's assent. At the same time,

the idea of united India implicit in the statement was repudiated. "The partition of India is the only solution." The Muslim League's co-operation in the conduct of the war would be governed by the same "two nations" doctrine.

The Hindu Mahasabha regarded the new proposals as justifying its co-operation at the Centre for the conduct of the war. It agreed to dominion status at the post-war objective, but it insisted that in safeguarding the minority rights, the claims of the majority must not be ignored.

At the request of *News Chronicle*, Gandhi cabled the following statement on August 13:

"Having retired from participation in Congress politics, I have refrained from expressing opinion on the recent Viceregal pronouncement. But pressure from friends in England and the fellow workers here demands response from me. The Viceregal pronouncement is deeply distressing. It widens the gulf between India, as represented by the Congress, and England. Thinking India outside the Congress too has not welcomed the pronouncement. My own fear is that democracy is being wrecked. Britain cannot claim to stand for justice, if she fails to be just to India. India's disease is too deep to yield to any make-believe or half-hearted measures."

The speech that Mr. Amery, the Secretary of State, made in the House of Commons, on August 14, did not improve matters. He categorically asserted: "India cannot be unitary in the sense that we are in this island, but she can still be a unity. India's future house of freedom has room for many mansions." After expatiating on the attitude of the different elements in India to the constitutional problem, Mr. Amery referred to the Congress demand and said: "It is a demand which really raises the whole unresolved constitutional issue and prejudges it in the sense favoured by the Congress and rejected by the minorities."

The Congress felt badly let down. It had openly disagreed with Gandhi and expressed its inability to extend the principle of non-violence to the national defence of India and had set forth the conditions which would enable it to throw its full weight into the war effort. The Congress Working Committee met at Wardha on August 18 and placed on record that the "rejection of the Congress proposals is a proof of the British Government's determination to continue to hold India by the sword". In view of the emergency

the committee decided to call a meeting of the A.-I.C.C. at Bombay on September 15.

When the A.-I.C.C. met it was clear that the Congress leaders, after their brief defection, had resumed their allegiance to Gandhi. "Back to Ramgarh" was the note of Azad's opening speech. The time had come to take the "next step". "The offer Great Britain has made through the Viceroy is not worth looking at," observed Azad. "These events made us decide to again request Mahatma Gandhi to assume the active leadership of the Congress. I am glad to inform you that he has agreed to do this, as now there is no difference whatsoever between him and the Working Committee. The Delhi resolution was a great obstacle in his way. But the offer contained in it having been rejected, there was no reason why he should not assume the leadership of the Congress. I must take this opportunity to make it clear that there was nowhere any intention to discard non-violence; only we did not feel sure if we would be able to meet every internal and external emergency without resort to force. At the same time, it was our desire to build the future of this country on the firm basis of non-violence and give the world a new ideal. Now that Britain has rejected all the offers made by the Congress, we have only one thing left to do and that is to non-co-operate in every way with the war effort."

The following resolution drafted by Gandhi and recommended by the Working Committee was then formally moved by Nehru and seconded by Sardar Patel. They made no speeches, leaving it to Gandhi to explain to the All-India Congress Committee the implications of the resolution which read thus:

"The All-India Congress Committee cannot submit to a policy which is a denial of India's natural right to freedom, which suppresses the free expression of the public opinion, and which would lead to the degradation of her people and to their continued enslavement. By following this policy, the British Government have created an intolerable situation, and are imposing upon the Congress a struggle for the preservation of the honour and the elementary rights of the people. The Congress is pledged under Gandhiji's leadership to non-violence for the vindication of India's freedom. At this grave crisis in the movement for our national freedom, the All-India Congress Committee, therefore, requests him to guide the Congress in the action that should be taken. The Delhi resolution,

confirmed by the A.-I.C.C. at Poona, which prevented him from so doing, no longer applies. It has lapsed.

"The A.-I.C.C. sympathize with the British people as well as the peoples of all other countries involved in the war. Congressmen cannot withhold their admiration for the bravery and endurance shown by the British nation in the face of danger and peril. They can have no ill will against them, and the spirit of satyagraha forbids the Congress from doing anything with a view to embarrass them. But this self-imposed restraint cannot be taken to the extent of self-extinction. The Congress must insist on the fullest freedom to pursue its policy, based on non-violence. The Congress, however, has no desire at the present moment to extend non-violent resistance, should this become necessary, beyond what is required for the preservation of the liberties of the people.

"In view of certain misapprehensions that have arisen with regard to the Congress policy of non-violence, the A.-I.C.C. desire to state this afresh, and to make it clear that this policy continues, notwithstanding anything contained in previous resolutions which may have led to these misapprehensions. This committee firmly believes in the policy and practice of non-violence not only in the struggle for swaraj, but also, in so far as this may be possible of application, in free India. The committee is convinced and recent world events have demonstrated that complete world disarmament is necessary, and the establishment of a new and a juster political and economic order, if the world is not to destroy itself and revert to barbarism. A free India will throw all her weight in favour of world disarmament and should herself be prepared to give a lead in this. Such lead will inevitably depend on external factors and internal conditions, but the state would do its utmost to give effect to this policy of disarmament. Effective disarmament and establishment of world peace by the ending of national wars, depend ultimately on the removal of causes of wars and national conflicts. The causes must be rooted out by the ending of the domination of one country over another and the exploitation of one people or group by another. To that end India will peacefully labour, and it is with this objective in view that the people of India desire to attain the status of a free and independent nation. Such freedom will be the prelude to the close association with other countries within a comity of free nations for the peace and progress of the world."

The president requested Gandhi to address the meeting. "The responsibility I am assuming," he said in his Hindustani speech, "is perhaps the greatest I have ever assumed in my life. I do not know whether I shall succeed in satisfying you or even satisfying me. Nor have I the vaguest notion of the result. But for over fifty years, I have trained myself never to be concerned about the result. What I should be concerned about is the means, and when I am sure of the purity of means, faith is enough to lead me on. All fear and trembling melt away before that faith, and once we have launched forth, there is no looking back."

He then spoke in English:

"I know that you have listened to me with the greatest patience. I am specially grateful to you today, for the simple reason that I have said many things which may have displeased you. But it was never my intention to displease those whom I want to harness for the great work that lies before you and before me. I have to speak to you at length, because I have to shoulder this heavy burden. I have not come with a prepared speech at all. The thoughts will come as I proceed.

"Let me begin with a thought which has been weighing with me for a considerable time. When the war broke out and I went to Simla to see the Viceroy, I issued a statement the next day, not in a representative but in my individual capacity. A friend has now reminded me how good it would have been if I had simply hung on to that statement, although I could not take the Congress with me; and on the eve of my shouldering this responsibility, he prayed that I should be guided by God to take up that original position and retire. I have very great regard for him. I have not forgotten that statement, nor have I any regret or apology to offer. If such thing occurs—and history often repeats itself—I happen to go to another Viceroy, I should make the same statement.

"Although I spoke only for myself, deep down in me was the Congressman speaking. The Viceroy did not send for me because I was M. K. Gandhi. M. K. Gandhi has no place in his books. The man who wields the sceptre can have no room for individuals. He sent for me because he thought I would represent the Congress view and I would be able to carry conviction to Congressmen.

"And I withdrew from that position, not as an individual but as a Congressman, and because I failed to carry conviction even to a

single Congressman. Happily you have got in the Working Committee men with sterling honesty, who had the courage to tell me that, although it was my statement, they did not feel like accepting it. They said that they had had bitter experience behind them and that, therefore, they would not be able to take that position. Thus, you had the resolution that was passed by the Congress immediately after the war. I agreed with the resolution as a representative, although I said to them that, if I could carry conviction, my original position was the best possible one to take up. If I had pressed the members of the Working Committee to accept my position, they would have done so, but it would have been only mechanical. The statement was not made to deceive the Viceroy or, for the matter of that, a single soul. It came straight from the heart. It was not a theatrical display. It was the opening up of the secret recesses of heart before the world, the Viceroy and the Congress. If these words of mine could not find an echo in their hearts, they would have been of no use whatsoever to the Viceroy, to the great English nation or to India. That still remains my sentiment. If I could not convince the Congress of my attitude, it would not carry us further. It would have been a wrong step to take, and hence it was not taken. With that background I approach this resolution.

"I have made repeated statements that I would not be guilty of embarrassing the British people or the British Government, when their very existence hung in the balance, that I would not be true to my satyagraha, would not be true to non-violence, would not be true to the truth, which I hold dear, if I did so, and, therefore, could not do so. That very man now stands before you to shoulder the burden of satyagraha. Why? There comes a time when a man in his weakness mistakes vice for virtue; and virtue itself, when taken away from its context and from the purpose for which it was dedicated, becomes vice. I felt that if I did not go to the assistance of the Congress and take the helm, even if it be in fear and trembling, I would be untrue to myself.

"I feel that in taking the step that we are doing, we are rendering a great service not only to the Congress but to the whole of India. And we are rendering a service not to the whole of India only. History will record—and Englishmen will be able to grasp this statement some day—that we rendered help to the English nation, and they will find that we were true to our salt and we had the

same bravery and fearlessness of which the Englishman is proud and for which he is renowned. I, who claim to be a fast friend of the British people, will be guilty of an unfriendly conduct if, under a false sense of modesty or because the people may think otherwise about me or because Englishmen themselves will be angry with me, I do not issue a warning that the virtue of self-restraint now becomes vice, because it will kill the Congress organization, and it will kill the very spirit which is exercising this restraint.

"When I say this, I am speaking not only for the Congress, but for all who stand for national freedom—Muslims, Parsis, Christians and even those who are against the Congress—so long as they represent India's aspiration, unadulterated independence. I should be untrue to all of them, if at this time I said, 'no embarrassment to the British people.' I must not repeat parrot-like 'no embarrassment.' Then that repetition would be just as useful for my salvation or for the guarding of my virtue, as the repetition by a parrot of God's name which cannot bring him salvation, because it is only a mechanical and vocal effort without any intelligence behind it. Therefore, if I exercise that suppression at this critical moment in the history of the nation, it would be useless. I should be perfectly untrue to myself, if I hid myself in Sevagram and said, "No, I have told you, 'no embarrassment.' "

"The language of this resolution is in the main mine. It appealed to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. I used to be the Congress draftsman. Now he has taken my place. He saw it was inevitable, if we were to be true to the non-violent resistance to the extent to which we wanted to go. The Working Committee has accepted this phraseology deliberately, well knowing its implications. The result is this: If we can get a declaration from the British Government that the Congress can carry on anti-war propaganda, and preach non-co-operation with the Government in their war effort, we will not have civil disobedience.

"I do not want England to be defeated or humiliated. It hurts me to find St. Paul's Cathedral damaged. It hurts me as much as I would be hurt if I heard that the Kashi Vishvanath Temple or the Jumma Masjid was damaged. I would like to defend both the Kashi Vishvanath Temple and the Jumma Masjid and even St. Paul's with my life, but would not take a single life for their defence. That is my fundamental difference with the British people.

My sympathy is there with them nevertheless. Let there be no mistake on the part of Englishmen, Congressmen, or others, whom my voice reaches, as to where my sympathy lies. It is not because I love the British nation and hate the German. I do not think that the Germans as a nation are any worse. We are all tarred with the same brush; we are all members of the vast human family. I decline to draw any distinctions. I cannot claim any superiority for the Indians. We have the same virtues and the same vices. Humanity is not divided into watertight compartments, so that we cannot go from one to another. They may occupy one thousand rooms, but they are all related to one another. I would not say, 'India should be all in all, let the whole world perish.' That is not my message. India should be all in all, consistently with the well-being of other nations of the world. I can keep India intact and its freedom also intact only if I have the goodwill towards the whole of the human family and not merely for the human family which inhabits this little spot of the earth called India. It is big enough compared to other smaller nations, but what is India in the wide world, or in the universe?

"Let there be no mistake as to what I am about. I want my individuality to remain unimpaired. If I lose it, I would be of no service to India, much less to the British people, still less to humanity. My individual liberty is the same as the nation's, convertible with the national liberty. I do not claim any greater liberty for myself. Hence my liberty is equal to the liberty of you all and no greater. I feel that, if my liberty is at stake, yours is also at stake. I claim the liberty of going through the streets of Bombay and say that I shall have nothing to do with this war, because I do not believe in this war and in this fratricide that is now going on in Europe. I admire the bravery. But what is the use of this bravery? I deplore the foolishness and the crass ignorance. These people do not know what they are fighting for. That is how I look at this war that is going on across the seas. I cannot possibly take part in it. Nor I want the Congress to do so.

"The part that I would like to take is the part of peacemaker. If the British people in their wisdom had recognized the independence not of the Congress but of all India, and if the other parties in India had also co-operated with us, we would have taken the honourable place of peacemakers between these nations. Such is my

ambition. But, today, I know that it is a day-dream. But sometimes a man lives in his day-dreams. I live in mine, and picture the world as full of good human beings—not goody-goody human beings. In the socialist's language, there will be a new structure of society, a new order of things. I am also aspiring after a new order of things that will astonish the world. If you try to dream these day-dreams, you will also feel exalted as I do.

"And now I come to our 'tin-pot' Congress—tin-pot in the estimation of others, not my own. If we do not take care, the Congress will disappear, and if the Congress disappears, the national spirit disappears. One after another, Congressmen are being selected and jailed. It is not satyagraha to watch people being taken away. It is much better for all of us to rush into the jaws of the opponent. After all, as the Maulana Saheb once said, India is a vast prison. Let us get out of this slave-prison by breaking the prison bars. He said to the Sikhs at the time of the Nankana Saheb tragedy: 'You may protect one gurudwara; but what about the vast gurudwara that is India? We have to deliver it from bondage.' Those words ring true even today in my ears. If this liberty of the nation or the movement for freedom is likely to be choked, then I say that the virtue of self-restraint is going to become a vice. That virtue of restraint cannot be carried to the extent of the extinction of the national spirit wherever it may reside, whether among Congressmen or non-Congressmen.

"I do not want to hurl civil disobedience or anything in the face of the Government without making my meaning clear, the meaning I attach to the sum-total of Government actions—actions beginning with the declaration of the Viceroy, the statement of the Secretary of State for India, and the series of actions and the policy that the Government have pursued since. The sum-total of all these has left an indelible impression on my mind that there is something wrong, some injustice being perpetrated against the whole nation, and that the voice of freedom is about to be stifled. This is implied in the resolution, not in the exact language which I am using now, but you will see the meaning clear as daylight.

"In order completely to clarify our position, I propose to approach the Viceroy with a request that he will be good enough to see me and I have no doubt that he will. I will place my difficulties before him and I will place the Congress difficulties before him. I will

approach him in your name. I will tell him that this is the position to which we have been reduced: We do not want to embarrass you and deflect you from your purpose in regard to war effort. We go our way, and you go yours, undeterred, the common ground being non-violence. If we carry the people with us, there will be no war effort on the part of our people. If, on the other hand, without your using any but moral pressure, you find that the people help the war effort, we can have no cause for grumbling. If you can get assistance from the princes, from the zamindars, from anybody, high or low, you can have it; but let our voice also be heard. If you accept my proposal, it will be eminently honourable, it will certainly be a feather in your cap. It will be honourable of you, although you are engaged in a life and death struggle, that you have given us this liberty. It will be honourable of you that you take this great step, although you have limitless powers to choke our voice, and that you give us the fullest possible freedom, consistently with the observance of non-violence, to tell the people of India not to join the war effort.

"Let the people use any reasoning they like for their refusal to help the war effort. My reasoning is the only one which will sit well on Congressmen's lips. But I do not expect all to restrict themselves to that reasoning. Those who have a conscientious objection, as I have, will adopt my reasoning. Those who are tired of the British imperialism will use that argument. And there may be others who will have other arguments. All these should be covered under this freedom of speech, provided, however, that they all accept non-violence, provided also that what they say is said openly and not secretly. These are the implications of my generalship. If these do not satisfy you, you must reject this resolution summarily. So long as you can preach non-co-operation with the war effort in men and money, there should be no civil disobedience. But if you have not that liberty, there is no swaraj but perpetual bondage. I would like the British people and the Viceroy to be able to tell the world that they have given the leaders of the Indian people liberty to preach to their own people what they like. The British can then say to the world: 'Judge us by our conduct. Here in India we are playing the game.'

"I do not mind the British not responding to the Delhi resolution. They may say, 'At the present moment, you cannot interfere

with the management of the affairs as they stand. Deliverance will come to you in its own time. At this critical juncture do not worry us.' I will understand that argument. I will sympathize with it. I will hold my hand so long as there is no fraud or falsity in what they say. It is impossible for them to give us freedom. If freedom has got to come, it must be obtained by our own internal strength, by closing our ranks, by unity between all sections of the community. It cannot descend from heaven, nor can it be given as a gift from one nation to another. I do not know whether I am representing the feelings of the Working Committee members, because I have not discussed these things with them. But you have to take me with all my limitations, with the workings of my mind.

"The Viceroy may say, 'You are a visionary.' I may fail in my mission, but I will not quarrel. If he says he is helpless, I will not feel helpless. I will make good my position. I cannot sit still when I see Rammanohar Lohia and Jayaprakash Narayan in jail. They have not preached violence, but simply carried out the behests of the Ramgarh resolution. It was a point of honour with them.

"I have restrained myself, and I will restrain myself. I will not seek imprisonment. I do not want to offer civil disobedience. I will not place myself in peril. In this battle, I will not expose myself to imprisonment. But if the Government chooses, it will not be difficult to take me away. I will not be able to seal my lips or restrain my pen. It will be difficult for them to keep me in prison, not because India will rise in rebellion. India will be wrong if it does so. My own instinct is that they will not be able to keep me in jail.

"I will place my argument before the Viceroy. I may fail in my mission. But I have never approached a mission in despair. I may have approached it with the consciousness that I may be faced with a blind wall. But I have often penetrated blind walls. I shall approach the Viceroy in the confidence and hope, that he will understand the great reasonableness of the request of the Congress for full liberty to preach 'no war' in India. Everyone should have the perfect liberty to preach by pen and tongue: 'We cannot aid imperialism, we cannot help spoliation.'

"I shall strain every nerve to avoid satyagraha in your name. What shape it will take, when it comes, I do not know. But I know that there will be no mass civil disobedience, because mass civil disobedience is not required for this occasion. I have impenetrable

darkness before me regarding the future course of action. I hope that any action that we may take will be worthy of the Congress traditions and of the occasion.

"I have often said that I do not know the Congress mind, as I have buried myself in Sevagram. It is because of the Congress difficulty that I have dragged myself to Bombay, and immediately I am released from this duty you will find me in Sevagram. But I have got strength and resourcefulness enough to lead this battle, although I am buried in Sevagram. And I shall do better and clearer thinking in Sevagram than anywhere else, simply because I have built up there an atmosphere for my growth. With the march of time my body must decay but, I hope, not my wisdom. I seem to see things more clearly with the advance of age. It may be self-deception, but there is no hypocrisy. Self-deception is good sometimes in that it helps one to remain cheerful and not to give way to despair. It will be, therefore, wrong to you to drag me from Sevagram; and I promise that I shall give a good account of my stewardship.

"There are many parties in the Congress. We are not all of the same opinion. There is indiscipline in the Congress. I know it is inevitable in a mass organization which is growing from day to day. If it is all indiscipline and no discipline, the organization is on the downward path. Let it not be said of you that you come to the Congress although you do not believe in non-violence. How can you possibly sign the Congress pledge with violence in your breasts? I want complete obedience to the policy of non-violence. While the policy lasts, it is the same as though it was a creed, for so long as it holds good, it is as good as a creed. My creed holds me for life; yours so long as you hold it. Resign from the Congress, and you are free from it. Let us be clear regarding the language we use and the thoughts we nurture. For, what is language but the expression of thought? Let your thought be accurate and truthful, and you will hasten the advent of swaraj even if the whole world is against you. You will have won swaraj without having to spend nine million pounds a day or without burning a single home. If you are true to your policy, I am sure that without doing any of these things you will build up the majestic edifice of freedom.

"Now, for the violence party. Do not mix up methods, if you can help it. You have restrained yourselves for some years. Restrain

yourselves for some more years. Ours is not a small battle. If you restrain yourselves, you will lose nothing.

"Freedom of speech and pen is the foundation of swaraj. If the foundation-stone is in danger, you have to exert the whole of your might in order to defend that single stone. May God help you."

He explained this thought at greater length in his closing speech the next day, September 16:

"I am sorry that your mind has failed to grasp a very simple but a very important point that I made yesterday. I described the right of free speech as the foundation-stone of swaraj. Let me explain it. I have yet to come across a complete definition of swaraj. I do not think I have been able to give it myself. I do not think that even Jawaharlal has ever given it. It is possible that someone from amongst you may be able to give it, as it has often happened that others have defined for me things I have been labouring for. If anyone can do so, I shall gladly make him my guru. But this resolution contains the seed of swaraj. If you hold fast to it, all that the movers of various amendments desire is automatically attained. If we can win this liberty of free speech, either by fighting for it or by negotiation, we have secured everything—free speech for a communist like Dr. Ashraf and free speech for a Forward Bloc-wala like Sardar Sardul Singh. If I give it a religious colour, I can call it full religious liberty, the liberty, cultural and religious, that the Muslims are asking for. You say you want independence. But you forget that it is beyond their power to give it to us. Nor can we be independent by simply declaring that we are independent. We can be independent only, when after the British have left, we can remain unafraid and rule ourselves unafraid of any attack from any foreign power—Japan, Germany, Russia or Afghanistan. It is absurd to launch civil disobedience today for independence. How are we to fight for independence with those whose own independence is in grave peril? Even if independence can be given by one nation to another, it is not possible for the English. Those who are themselves in peril cannot save others. But if they fight unto death for their freedom and if they are at all reasonable, they must recognize our right of free speech. This they can certainly do. It is our duty to fight for that right. If they resist it and we have to fight and they are embarrassed, they will have invited embarrassment themselves.

"This liberty is a concrete issue which needs no defining. It is the foundation of freedom, especially when it has to be taken non-violently. To surrender it is to surrender the only means for attaining freedom.

"When Rajaji said to me that his own offer was easier for the British to accept than mine, he was expressing half the truth. It may be easy indeed for them to recognize our independence, but I can understand, during the war, their reluctance to grant us central responsible government. For once they grant it, they have to carry on through us. One day it may be Rajaji, another day it may be Jawaharlal, and then it may be a Damodar Menon. This co-operation that we offer them would be to them a commodity of doubtful value, for they do not trust us, and if I were in the Viceroy's position, I should understand his misgivings. It is risky for them to carry on war through those whom they do not trust. But where is the risk in letting everyone declare that he is free to refuse all co-operation in war and preach that non-co-operation to everyone he comes across, unless they want to enforce co-operation at the point of the bayonet?

"But the right sought to be asserted is subject to the condition that we observe non-violence. The condition is necessary because a Government that is based on violence cannot tolerate violence. That is the unavoidable logic of violence. But even those who are violently inclined need not despair, if they will listen to me today. For, if we win swaraj through non-violence, even the violent, if there are any, will have not only the liberty to preach but to do violence. There would be no army. But that will not prevent a Sikh or a Khaksar from possessing a sword or swords. If the rest are believers in non-violence, what violence can these inflict? The restraint of speech and action of the majority will automatically exercise similar restraint on those who are contrarily inclined. At any rate, if I had my way as the president of a non-violent Indian republic, I should not hesitate to give those who are violently inclined, the liberty of violent speech. On the other hand, let me tell them that under a violent state they cannot expect that liberty.

"Let me tell those who want mass civil disobedience, strikes and no-rent campaigns, that they forget that all those things are there in our old resolution of 1920. In fact, I have been striving all these years to prepare the country for all these things. We should have

been able to do all of them and to bring about a new social order by now, if only we had observed the conditions. And if we did not observe the conditions and were not ready, none but we were to blame.

"But you are free to organize mass civil disobedience if you like, though you will then be guilty of indiscipline. But as I said to Subhas Babu, who put me the same question, I shall gladly congratulate you if you succeed, but you cannot have my blessings. Of course, the honourable course for you would be to leave the Congress.

"But you know that you cannot organize mass disobedience at the present stage without violence. For similar reasons, I am asking students not to leave colleges, to join satyagraha, unless they will leave them for good. Similarly about strikes. Dr. Suresh Banerji, who was once my co-worker, but who has for some years strayed away from me but seems now to be coming back, said to me some time ago that only I could conduct a labour strike to a successful conclusion. I can do all these things, if I had your full co-operation and complete discipline."

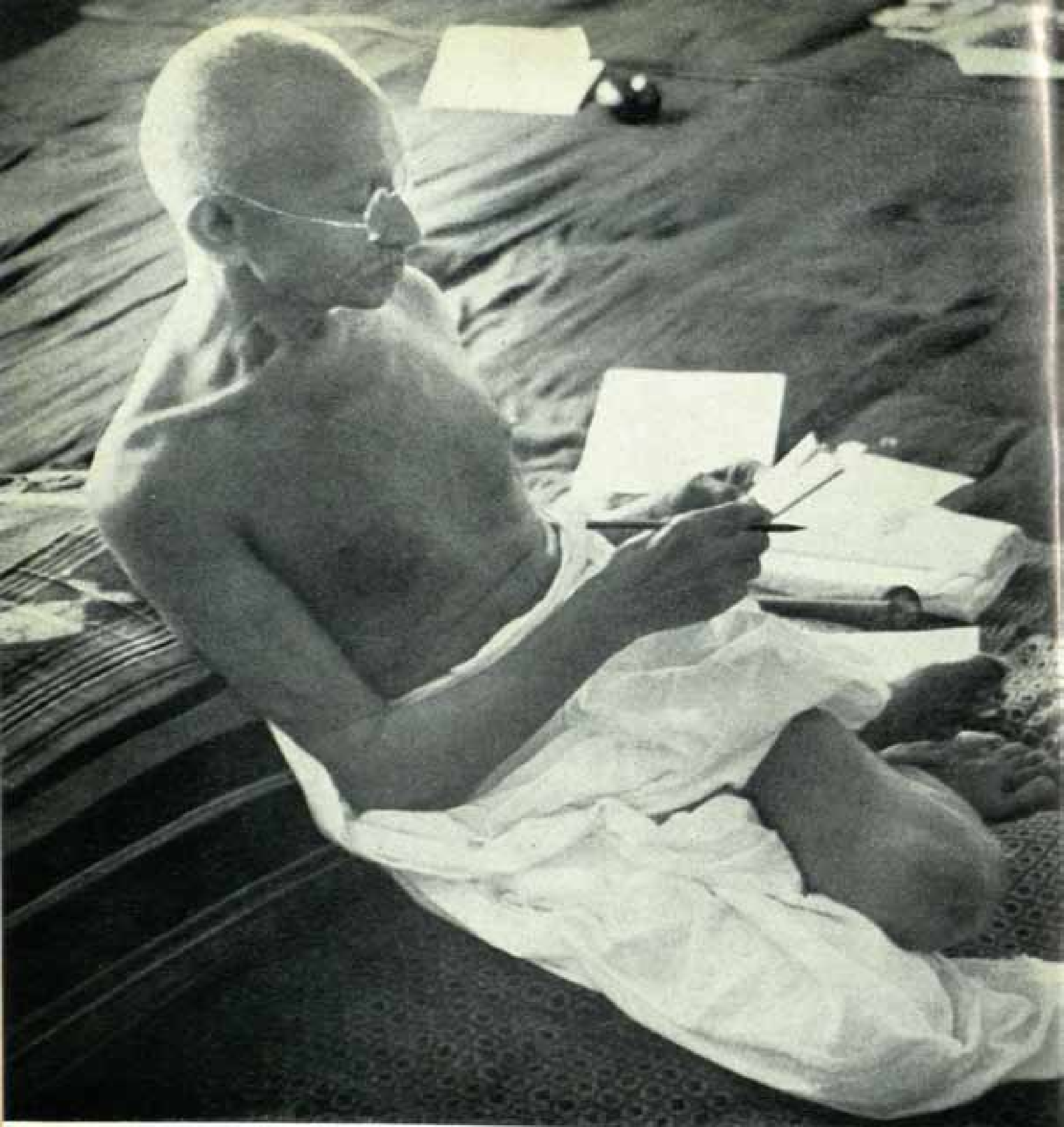
As regards the immediate effect, Gandhi explained: "When we come to our own, the government will be in charge not only of the Congressmen but of non-Congressmen. There will be adult suffrage, and the government will be formed by the elected representatives, of all the adult voters—Hindus, Muslims, Parsis, Christians, Jews, and those whom we foolishly have regarded as the untouchables. What a mixed parliament of these representatives will do, I do not know. But I hope that the Congress vote will always be in favour of non-violence. If it is in a minority, it will record its vote; and if it is in a majority, it will administer the state non-violently. For the Congress, as a Congress, can do nothing else. Supposing the Government accepts our demand tomorrow and says: 'Do what you like in future, but now please help us with men and money.' I am afraid even then we shall have to say to the Government: 'We are sorry, we cannot give the co-operation. We wish you well, and may God help you. But committed as we are to the policy of non-violence, nothing that you can offer can persuade us to give you violent assistance.' "

In his closing speech, Gandhi referred to the Hindu-Muslim question, as it had been raised during the debate. He observed: "If a conflict is there in store for us, who can prevent it? We have to be

Photograph : Kanu Gandhi

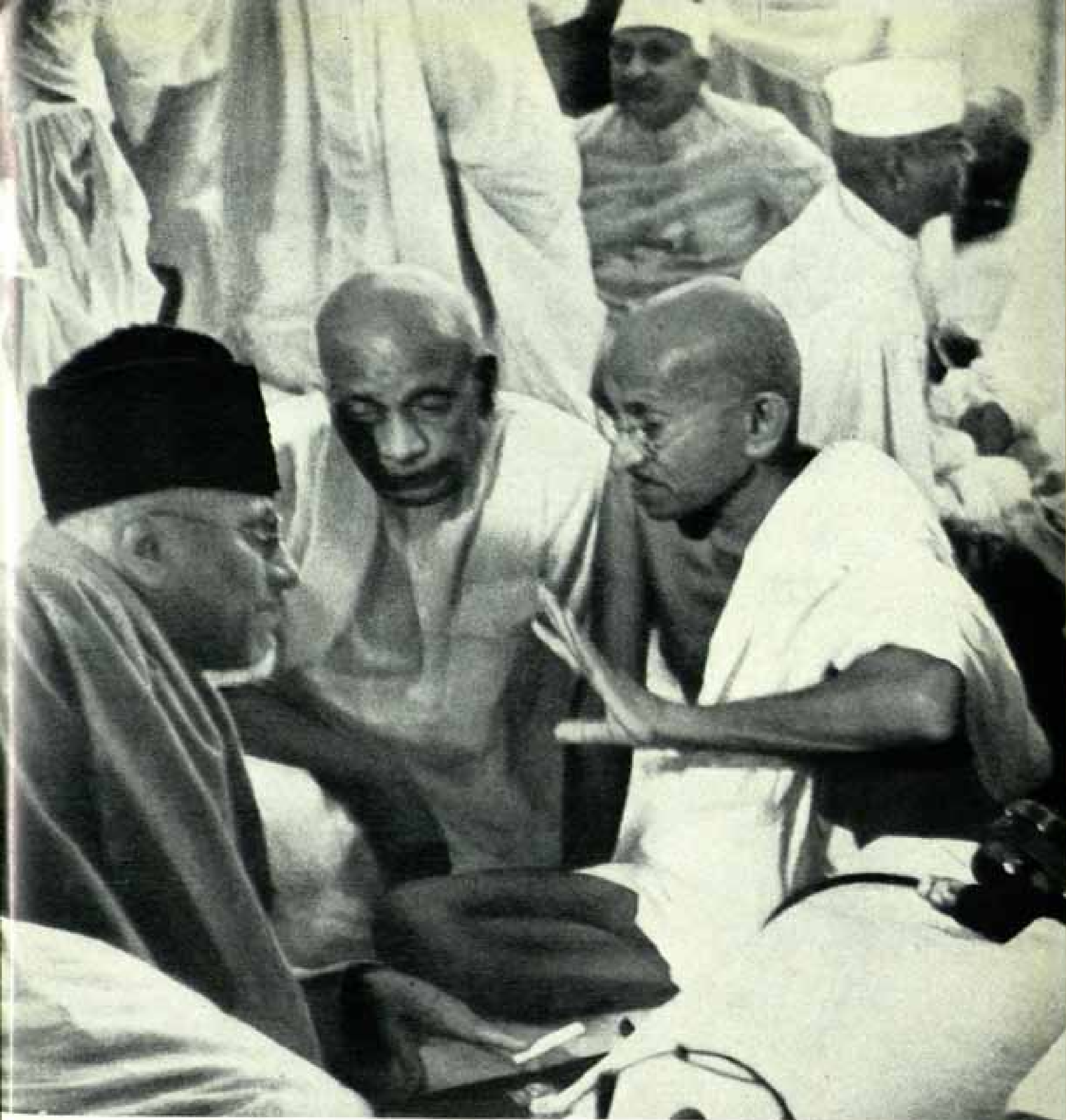
At the marriage ceremony of a Harijan couple from Malabar in front of Gandhi's hut at Sevagram, September 6, 1940

Addressing the Harijan Sevak Sangh workers, Sevagram, September 1940



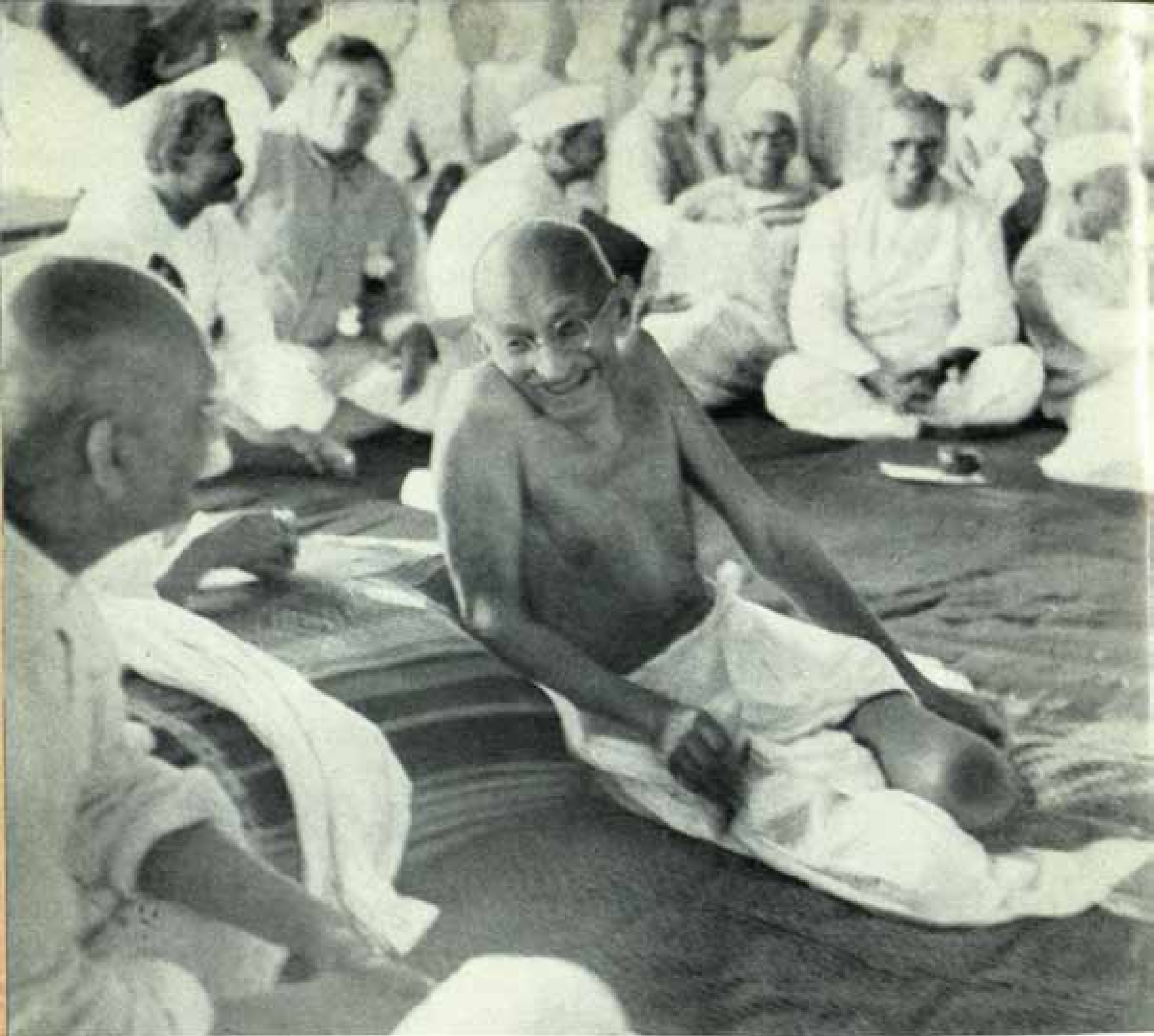
Courtesy : Indrakant Patel

Gandhi studying a draft resolution at the A.-I.C.C. meeting, Bombay, September 15, 1940



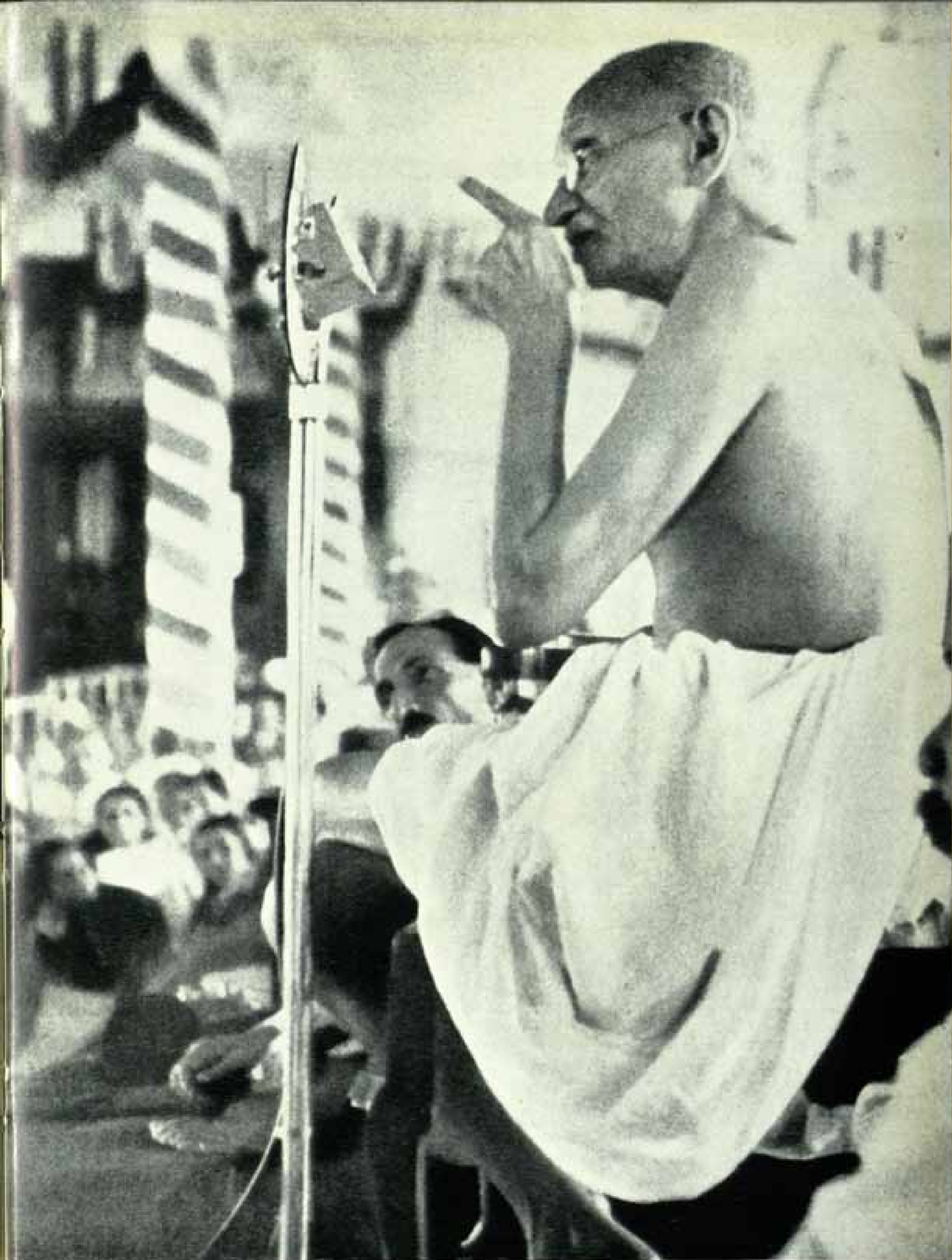
From Sumati Morarjee Collection

In conference with President Azad, A.-I.C.C., Bombay



From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Cracking a joke with Vallabhbhai Patel, A.-I.C.C., Bombay, September 15, 1940



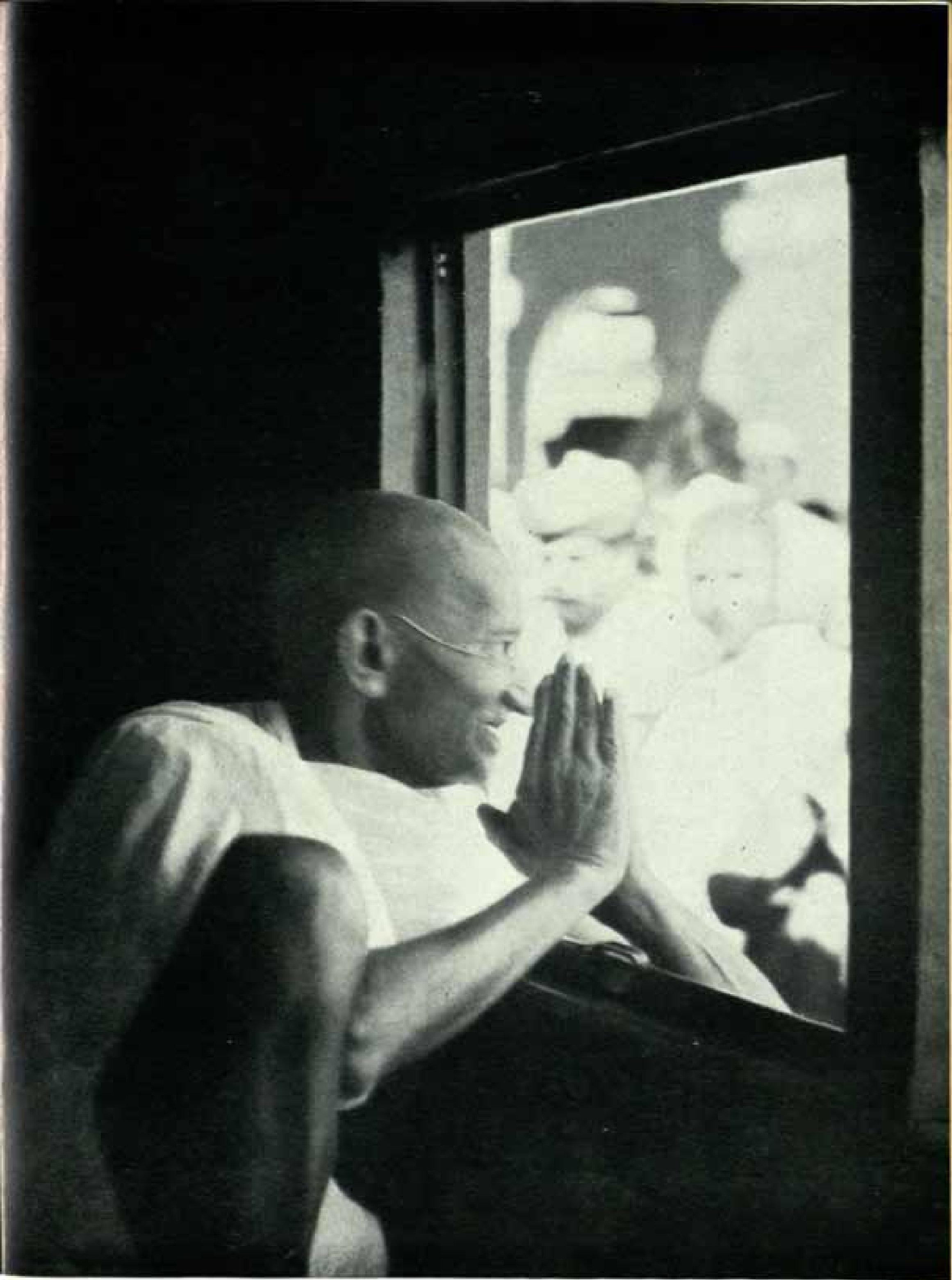
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Gandhi's closing speech at the Bombay A.-I.C.C., September 16, 1940



From Sumati Morarjee Collection

During the A.-I.C.C. meeting, Bombay, September 16, 1940



Photograph : Kanu Gandhi

On the train to Simla, September 1940



From Sumati Morarjee Collection

On his way to see the Viceroy, Simla, September 27, 1940

prepared even for anarchy and chaos, but we must have the faith that non-violence cannot result in chaos. But if somehow disorders take place, they will be a test of our non-violence. Non-violence is a force that gains in intensity with the increase in the violence that it has to deal with. I hope that you will get that power of non-violence before I die. But there is a message I should like to reach the ears of every Musalman. India cannot win independence, if the eight or more crores of Musalmans are opposed to it. But I cannot believe that all of them are so opposed, until it is proved to me by the vote of every adult Musalman. Let them declare that they want to have their political salvation apart from that of the Hindus. India is a poor country full of Hindus and Musalmans and others staying in every corner of it. To divide it into two is worse than anarchy. It is vivisection which cannot be tolerated—not because I am a Hindu, for I am speaking from this platform as a representative of the Hindus, Muslims, Parsis and all else. But I will say to them, 'Vivisect me before you vivisect India. You shall not do what even the Moguls, who ruled over India for over two centuries, did not do.' What I have said about the Musalmans applies equally to the Sikhs. If thirty lakhs of Sikhs will obstruct Indian independence, we shall deal with them non-violently. Non-violent swaraj cannot be won except by non-violence. There are other obstacles too imposed by the existence of an alien power. But we must strain every nerve to achieve communal peace. Islam means peace. That peace cannot be confined to the Musalmans. It must mean peace for the whole world."

The A.-I.C.C. adopted the momentous resolution by 192 votes to 7 in pursuance of which Gandhi assumed the leadership.

The Working Committee then went into session and passed the following resolution:

"In view of the resolution passed by the A.-I.C.C., the Working Committee calls upon all the Congress organizations to stop all civil disobedience, individual or other, pending definite instructions from Gandhiji. He regards this suspension as indispensable for his forthcoming interview with His Excellency the Viceroy, and as a test of the discipline of the registered and unregistered Congressmen and all Congress-minded men and women, and also as a short course of obedience to law before a recourse to civil disobedience should it become necessary."

A representative of the Associated Press of America met Gandhi in Bombay and said: "Hundreds of our papers have printed the A.-I.C.C. resolution and a summary of your speeches wired by me, and have commented on it. Four questions emerge out of the comments, and I seek your answers to the questions."

The main question was: "How do you desire not to embarrass Great Britain with your demand to preach anti-war propaganda in a non-violent way?"

Gandhi said: "Because non-violence is the Congress creed which involves Congress hostility to all war. Hence, it is a vital necessity for the Congress to dissociate itself from identifying itself with any war. Hence my desire not to embarrass Great Britain was necessarily limited and conditioned by the counter necessity of preserving the Congress existence, and, therefore, civil disobedience is definitely restricted to the freedom of speech and action, provided they are absolutely non-violent. Therefore, I have claimed in my speech that, if the full import of Congress action is understood, it must in the end help Britain and the world."

"Why?" asked the correspondent.

"Because, in the midst of this conflagration all round, there is one powerful body pinning its faith to uttermost non-violence. If it succeeds, then the groaning world can heave a sigh of relief and find a way out of these monstrous armaments."

"How do you visualize the future of India in the event of a Nazi victory?"

"All I can say is that I am not dismayed by the prospect, if my country remains true to the cult of non-violence. But that does not mean that I should be in any way pleased with the prospect of a Nazi victory. What terrifies me is that as things are going on at present, defeat of Nazism will be bought at a terrific price, namely, superior Nazism, call it by any name you like."

"In view of what has happened in Malabar, is there any hope of mass civil disobedience being carried on non-violently?"

"Not at present," replied Gandhi, "and, therefore, as you must have noticed in my speech I made an emphatic declaration that, so far as I was concerned, there was no prospect of my embarking on mass civil disobedience. But if you ask me whether it is ever possible to conduct mass civil disobedience without its resulting in violence, I would emphatically say 'yes'. But my country is not at

present ready for mass action, and, in a way, I am thankful that the unfortunate events in Malabar have come as a warning to the country and a pointer for me also."

"Does your policy mean disapproval of America's help to Britain in the shape of planes and munitions?" was the last question.

"Not in the slightest," replied Gandhi. "For the simple reason that America does not believe with the Indian National Congress in non-violent action. I wish it did. Then America's contribution to peace and help to Britain would be infinitely more substantial than any number of planes and any amount of material that she can supply to Britain. And if the weekly correspondence I receive from America and the visits from the Americans who come to see me is any index to the American opinion, I expect America to take a leaf out of the Congress book and to outrun the Congress in the race for the establishment of peace on earth through universal disarmament."

The correspondent of *News Chronicle* presented a conundrum on behalf of the British: "While expressing your sympathy with the British people in their plight, don't you think there is an inconsistency between your earlier decisions and your latest decision?"

"I thought," said Gandhi "that I had clearly and sufficiently explained my position in my speech, in anticipation of the charge of inconsistency. If there is any inconsistency, it is due in this particular instance to changed circumstances. My sympathy is not only the same as it had been expressed in Simla on the declaration of war, it has become deeper because what was imaginary has become vividly real. In Simla, almost a year ago, I had expressed my grief over what might befall Britain. Today, the dreaded thing has happened and is still going on. By nature I am so framed that every calamity moves me, irrespective of the people whom it may overtake. But my sympathy, even though it is deeper today than a year ago, has undoubtedly changed in form. I was unprepared for the recent Government declarations, and I claim that it is the genuineness of my sympathy which has made me single out the one fact which Britain can easily recognize and yield without any hitch in her prosecution of war. I readily grant that there might be some reason for not dividing the responsibility for the conduct of the war with those who are the determined opponents of the British imperialism and all it implies, and, therefore, I felt that, if

the Congress continued to abide by its policy of non-embarrassment which is inherent in its non-violence, the Congress should for the moment abate agitation by way of direct action for independence. But, freedom of speech and corresponding action is the breath of democratic life. Freedom of propagating non-violence as substitute for war is the most relevant when indecent savagery is being perpetrated by the warring nations of Europe. The Congress will forfeit all its right to be considered a non-violent organization, if out of false sympathy or, what would be worse, fear of consequences, it ceased to agitate against the inhumanity that is now being perpetrated in Europe and which if not checked by somebody or some organization, may overtake the whole world. I hope this statement of Congress policy as I interpret it, as its sole guide, will not only satisfy the British public opinion but will make it range itself on the side of the Congress, so as to enable the Viceroy to recognize the justice of the Congress claim which is a claim not for itself but is a claim for freedom of speech, no matter by whom exercised so long as it does not promote violence in any shape or form."

On the train to Wardha, on September 18, Gandhi wrote an editorial entitled "I Was Unjust Because Weak":

"I know Rajaji enough to understand that he is too brave to need any support from anybody and he is too philosophic to harbour an injury for many hours if not minutes. I know also that his fine sense of humour enables him to enjoy a joke at his expense. Therefore, this confession must be taken as one for my own satisfaction only.

"I have told the public that, had I not egged him on, Rajaji would never have brought forward his resolution at New Delhi. Having great regard for his judgement and his honesty, when he asserted with amazing assurance that I was wrong and he was right in the implications and application of non-violence, I allowed myself to doubt the correctness of my interpretation to the point of allowing and encouraging him to act on his. I showed weakness and became unjust to him. A weak man is just by accident. A strong but non-violent man is unjust by accident. I was unjust to Rajaji because I exposed him to ridicule and unkind attacks. Though no ultimate harm has come to the Congress because what I still consider was an error has been rectified, it is not a good thing for a great leader to have his work undone all of a sudden, for I know

that Rajaji still feels that he was right. If his view had prevailed, the resolution that now holds sway would not have taken the shape it has. I would still have been out of the Congress. For, I was out of it at Wardha before the Delhi resolution was taken as the natural outcome of Wardha.

"If I was unjust to Rajaji, I was also unjust to the Working Committee. For had I remained firm, the Wardha resolution too would not have been passed. I hold that, so long as I am accepted as the sole authority on satyagraha and its implications, they must not be a matter of vote. My colleagues may debate the pros and cons with me and try to convince me that their interpretation is right. If I cannot accept it, my judgement should prevail because I am both the author of satyagraha and the general in satyagraha action. The only way the colleagues can avoid my judgement is by absolving me from guidance. They did in so many words at Wardha. But it is plain that the absolution was not what that word means. They were most unwilling to give me absolution. And it was given, because I wrung it from them. My weakness began at Wardha. When a serious crisis arose, I should have raised the issue of jurisdiction. It was outside the Working Committee's jurisdiction to decide upon the meaning and the application of a matter which belonged to their expert who was their interpreter and their executive officer.

"I am aware that all the members of the Working Committee do not accept my opinion as to jurisdiction. The matter has not come up for decision. But before the committee and I came to the resolution now before the country, I had made the confession I have now published for the sake of an esteemed co-worker.

"It is my conviction that, owing to a series of fortunate combination of acts of the members at the last Wardha meeting, the present resolution was conceived and we have been saved from a national disaster. We have come to a decision which, if Congressmen react to it as they should, must raise India to a position which India has never yet occupied, and brings it nearer to her goal, as nothing else could have done.

"Whether my estimate is right or wrong, time alone can show. But this is merely by the way. Nor is the purpose of this confession to invite the reader to accept my judgement as to the jurisdiction of the Working Committee. The mention of it was relevant to show

the nature of my error. It is unpardonable for a general to surrender his judgement to a fellow officer unless the conviction goes home to him that the latter is right—not may be right.

"I hope, I have given the public enough material to show that in all that Rajaji did he was throughout brave and correct. The incorrectness was due to me.

"And I wish to say the same thing about his 'sporting offer'. It is no part of this confession to defend it. But so far as I can see, the offer was truly sporting, if the correctness of the Poona resolution be accepted. It should be remembered that the Muslim League is a great organization wielding influence upon the Muslims of India. The Congress has dealt with it before, and I have no doubt it will deal with it in future. However mistaken Qaid-e-Azam may be in our estimation, let us give him the same credit for honesty of purpose as we claim for ourselves. When the war-cloud is lifted and when India comes to her own, surely Congressmen would just as much welcome a Muslim, a Sikh, a Christian, or a Parsi as premier, as they would a Hindu, and even a non-Congressman, no matter of what faith he may be. I am sure that Rajaji's 'sporting offer' meant no more and no less than this. When passions have died, the critics will read Rajaji's offer in its proper light. It is wrong to misjudge a public worker and doubly so when he happens to be of Rajaji's caliber. Rajaji has lost nothing by the misjudgement. But a nation may easily harm itself by misjudging its true servants and denying itself their services. Above all, when the Congress may have to embark upon a great non-violent struggle for the fundamental liberty, it behoves Congressmen to guard against harsh, hasty and uncharitable judgement."

Breach

1940

In the wake of Gandhi, an American journalist trekked to Sevagram to ask important questions arising from the latest decision of the A.-I.C.C., questions not merely political but dealing with international relations and commercial and social intercourse.

"What is India's contribution towards making the world safe from Hitlerism?" was his first question.

Gandhi replied: "If the Congress succeeds in its non-violent effort, Hitlerism and all such 'isms' will go as a matter of course."

"Don't you think," the journalist next asked, "India should do something to make the facts better known in America and thus promote the interchange of goods and ideas? What do you think should be done in this connection?"

"First let us take up goods. America has had her bit, irrespective of the Indian conditions and India's wishes. So far as ideas are concerned, my unhappy experience is that the anti-Indian propaganda carried on in America has held undisputed sway, so much so, that even the visit of an outstanding personality like Tagore produced little impression on the American mind."

"But then why does not India endeavour to make herself better known in America?"

"If America really wanted to know what Indian opinion is at a given time, there is ample literature which is growing from day to day to which they have access. If you have in mind an Indian agency which should do the propagandist work on behalf of India, again our bitter experience has been that the imperialist propaganda that is carried on with much ability and perseverance and at a lavish expenditure is such that we can never overtake it, and the work of any such agency has up to now proved fruitless."

"Why not have the Indian people use Indian hand-spun cloth and keep the Indian mills busy for the export of the manufactured

cloth and yarn? Don't you think that this would help the cotton-grower?"

"I would not mind such a thing," replied Gandhi, "but it must be in order to supply the felt needs of the country which received our cloth. I have no idea of exploiting the other countries for the benefit of India. We are suffering from the poisonous disease of exploitation ourselves, and I would not like my country to be guilty of any such thing. If Japan, say, as a free country wanted India's help, and said that we could produce certain goods cheaper, and we might export them to Japan, we would gladly do so. But under my scheme of things, all dumping of goods by one country in another, supported by her army and her navy, has to cease."

"Apart from the export of merchandise what has India to give America, and in turn what does India expect from America?"

"I must correct your question for you. India sends no merchandise to America, she sends only raw material, and that is a matter for serious consideration for every nationalist. For we cannot suffer our country remaining an exporter of raw produce, for it means as it has meant, the extinction of handicrafts and art itself. I would expect America to treat India not as though India was a country for American exploitation, but as if India was a free country, although unarmed, and deserving, therefore, the same treatment that America would wish at the hands of India."

"You are repeating, Sir, the message of Jesus!" exclaimed the correspondent.

"I agree," affirmed Gandhi. "We are poor in technical skill, but as soon as you accept and consent to follow the teaching of Jesus I would not have to complain of all the skill being monopolized by America. You will then say, 'Here is a sister country poor in technical skill, let us offer our skilled assistance not for exploitation, not for a terrific price, but for its benefit, and so for nothing.' And here let me say a word about your missionaries. You send the missionaries here for nothing, but that also is part of imperialist exploitation. For they would like to make us, like you, better buyers of your goods, and unable to do without your cars and luxuries. So the Christianity that you send us is adulterated. If you established your schools and colleges and hospitals without the object of adding to the number of the so-called Christian population, your philanthropy would be untainted.

"As regards technical skill, I cannot afford to do what the Tatas are doing. They can afford to bring an American expert manager at Rs. 20,000 a month. But whilst the Tatas represent the spirit of adventure, they do not represent poor India. India has seven lakhs of villages which take in ninety per cent of her population. America has to think of these. America ought, if she will be of real help, to exercise her resourcefulness in this direction. And for that purpose America will have to cease to be the premier exporting country that she is. My views on the national planning differ from the prevailing ones. I do not want it along industrial lines. I want to prevent our villages from catching the infection of industrialization. American exploitation has added neither to the moral height of the exploited countries nor of the exploiting country, on the contrary it has impeded their march towards the spiritual progress, and has deadened America's real spirit of philanthropy. A phenomenon like the one that America witnessed cannot happen in India. I mean the destruction of tons of sugar and other agricultural products. You might have supplied other countries the sugar and the wheat or fed America's own unemployed."

"But, you could not have taken our pigs!"

"I know. But all do not think like me. Pandit Nehru wants industrialization, because he thinks that if it is socialized, it would be free from the evils of capitalism. My own view is that the evils are inherent in industrialism, and no amount of socialization can eradicate them."

"We have seen what Germany has done to Belgium and to the other countries. You would still say 'non-violence'? And yet you ask the Congress to fight because it is in danger of extinction. England also is in such danger and, therefore, fights."

"Don't you see the obvious difference? England would have to out-Hitler Hitler in defeating him. We do not want to use any of the weapons used by those who would crush us. I would say to an aggressor: 'You may destroy my churches, my hearths and my homes, everything but my soul. I will not come to your country to destroy your churches, hearths and homes. I will not defend my country with your weapons. I will simply refuse to co-operate with you, refuse to owe any allegiance to you, in a word I will say "no" to you.' He may take possession of India, but if I have my way, he will not impress a single Indian in his service.

"Then you must see another distinction. If we were fighting the Government with the Government's weapons, it would be the best chance for us to surprise the enemy and making their difficulty our opportunity. But we have been for over a year laying the utmost stress on non-embarrassment. It ought not to be turned against us. But we shall not use Britain's weapons, and that is how we shall help Britain against her will. I can understand the Viceroy's reluctance to surrender the reins of government to us while he has to fight Germany; but I cannot understand the Government's desire to suppress the non-violent spirit of the nation."

Gandhi was in correspondence with the Viceroy. On the eve of his visit to Simla, he wrote a note entitled "Khadi Week", dated September 23, 1940: "I want the prayers of all who believe in the efficacy of prayer that the result of my visit may prove fruitful to India and the British people, and ultimately may conduce to peace between the warring nations. I feel that though the issue raised by the A.-I.C.C. resolution seems small, it has in it great potency for the good of mankind."

"Khadi Week," he continued, "is the name given by me to my birthday celebration. Birth and death are twins. I should be sorry if the annual celebration was forgotten with my death. Therefore, I have popularized the birthday celebration as 'Khadi Week'. It enables me to deal with the event impersonally.

"I shall strain every nerve to avoid a civil disobedience struggle. But it would be wrong for the Congressmen to go to sleep while an effort for peace is being made. I hope no Congressman thinks that because I have undertaken command of the struggle, if it comes, the spinning and khadi conditions are waived. Those who do not strictly conform to these and other conditions will find themselves left out, if civil disobedience faces us. Moreover, what will the millions do who will never have to court any kind of suffering? Constructive programme is as much for them as for the civil resisters. Indeed, if it was confined to the latter only, the imprisonment of a few could never deserve to be called a national struggle. But voluntary suffering of even one person in the name of an organization or the nation, if backed by their unreserved co-operation in all manner prescribed by the commander, must ensure success."

On the way to Simla, on September 25, he answered the criticism levelled against his recent A.-I.C.C. speeches:

"The *Times of India* of the 17th instant, in its temperate criticism, takes me to task for my statement that 'the peoples of Europe do not know what they are fighting for.' It was bound to be resented. But truth, though seemingly harsh, has to be uttered when utterance becomes relevant, indeed imperative. I believe that the utterance had become overdue. I must say why I think that the warring nations do not know what they are fighting for. I had used the expression 'warring nations', not 'peoples of Europe'. This is not a distinction without any difference. I have distinguished between the nations and their leaders. The leaders, of course, know what they are fighting for. I make no admission that they are right. But neither the English nor the Germans nor the Italians know what they are fighting for, except that they trust their leaders and, therefore, follow them. I submit that this is not enough when the stake is so bloody and staggering as during this war. It is perhaps common cause that Germans and Italians do not know why English children should be slaughtered in cold blood and the beautiful English homes should be destroyed. But the *Times*' claim probably is that the British people know what they are fighting for. When I asked the British soldiers in South Africa during the Boer War, they could not tell me what they were fighting for. 'Theirs was' surely 'not to reason why'. They did not even know where they were being marched to. The British people would not be able to give me a more satisfying answer, if I happened to be in London and asked them why their soldiers were working havoc in Berlin. If the press accounts are to be relied upon, British skill and valour have wrought more havoc in Berlin than have the Germans in London. What wrong have the Germans done to the British? Their leaders have. Hang them by all means, but why destroy German homes and German civilian life? What difference does it make to the dead, the orphans and the homeless, whether the mad destruction is wrought under the name of totalitarianism or the holy name of liberty or democracy? I assert in all humility, but with all the strength at my command, that liberty and democracy become unholy when their hands are dyed red with innocent blood. I hear the living Christ saying: 'These so-called children of mine know not what they are doing. They take my Father's name in vain, for they disobey the central command of my Father!' If my ears don't deceive, I have erred in good company, if I have erred at all.

"And why have I uttered the truth? Because, I am confident that God has made me the instrument of showing the better way. If Britain seeks justice, she must appear before the imperial court of God with clean hands. She will not defend liberty and democracy by following the totalitarian methods, so far as war is concerned. She will not be able to retrace her steps after out-Hitlering Hitler in war. The last war is a resounding lesson. Her victory, if attained, will be a snare and a delusion. I know mine is a voice in the wilderness. But it will some day ring true. If liberty and democracy are to be truly saved, they will only be by non-violent resistance no less brave, no less glorious, than violent resistance. And it will be infinitely braver and more glorious because it will give life without taking any.

"Now I come to the *Statesman*'s article of 18th September. I am sorry to say that it is intemperate and written in anger. It is full of palpable mistakes, to use a mild word, no doubt unconscious. But I am not concerned with the intemperance of language. In the fierce heat of battle unknown before, the wonder is that the intemperance one sees sometimes is not much greater than it is.

"Here is the cream of the heavy indictment: 'We have often expressed our view about fundamental immorality and contradictory character of the doctrine. Non-co-operation is a method of war and not of peace... It carries with it a pretentious claim to spiritual value which involves the sanctimonious insincerities and mass hypocrisy masking intensified hatreds... A nation which accepted this doctrine would doom itself to slavery.'

"This is all contrary to the history of our own times in India. I claim that there is nothing immoral in non-violent non-co-operation. Violent resistance is itself non-co-operation, and it is immoral because of its violence. It becomes moral, when it is non-violent. Non-co-operation with evil is a sacred duty. It is essentially spiritual because of its non-violent character. The adjectives used by the writer would be deserved, if it was non-violent in name only. For the present argument, I must take the genuine article. Now for the facts. Non-violent non-co-operation, however imperfect it was, has redeemed India at least somewhat from the slavery under which she was groaning. It has raised India from the slough of despond, and has brought her prestige which nothing else could have. And I make bold to say that, if the non-violence offered had been not

adulterated, then its effect would have been still more visible. My greatest claim, however, is that it is this despised non-violent resistance which hitherto saved India from anarchy and red ruin. It is not yet entirely saved. If India is to be saved, it will only be by the non-violent method. I invite the *Statesman* writer to test the truth of my statement. He will have many infallible proofs in its support. A dispassionate study will enable him to serve both Britain and India."

Gandhi interviewed the Viceroy at Simla on the 27th and 30th of September, and the letters explaining what had transpired were subsequently published. Lord Linlithgow informed Gandhi of the manner in which the pacifists were treated in Britain. "While the conscientious objector is absolved from the duty of fighting and is allowed even to profess his own faith in public, he is not allowed to carry his opposition to the length of endeavouring to persuade the others, whether soldiers or munition workers, to abandon their allegiance or to discontinue their effort." He added, "it would clearly not be possible, in the interests of India herself to acquiesce in interference with the war effort which would be involved in freedom of speech as wide as that for which you have asked."

Gandhi replied:

"It is a matter of deep regret to me that the Government have not been able to appreciate the Congress position, meant just to satisfy the bare requirements of the people, whether Congressmen or others, who felt a conscientious objection to helping a war to which they were never invited and which they regard, so far as they are concerned, as one for saving the imperialism of which India is the greatest victim. Their objection is just as conscientious as mine as a war resister. I can't claim greater freedom for my conscience than for that of those I have named.

"As I made it plain in the course of our talks, the Congress is as much opposed to victory for Nazism, as any Britisher can be. But their objection cannot be carried to the extent of their participation in the war. And since you and the Secretary of State for India have declared that the whole of India is voluntarily helping the war effort, it becomes necessary to make clear that the vast majority of the people of India are not interested in it. They make no distinction between Nazism and the double autocracy that now rules India. Had His Majesty's Government recognized the freedom

required in the special condition of India, they would have justified the claim that they were receiving from India only such effort as they could voluntarily. The war party and the no-war party would have been placed on an equal footing, so far as each worked fully non-violently.

"As to the last paragraph of your letter, I wish to remind you that it was never contemplated to carry non-embarrassment to the point of self-extinction or, in other words, stopping all the national activities which were designed to make India peace-minded and show that India's participation could not benefit anyone, not excluding Britain. Indeed, I hold that, if India were left free to make her choice which freedom of speech implied, India would probably have turned the scales in favour of Britain and true liberty by the moral prestige which Britain would have then gained.

"I must, therefore, repeat that the Congress does still want to refrain from embarrassing the British Government in their war effort. But it is impossible for the Congress to make of the policy a fetish by denying its creed at this critical period in the history of mankind. If the Congress has to die, it would do so in the act of proclaiming its faith. It is unfortunate that we have not been able to arrive at an agreement on the single issue of freedom of speech. But I shall hug the hope that it will be possible for the Government to work out their policy in the spirit of the Congress position."

On the train to Wardha, on October 2, Gandhi issued the following appeal to satyagrahis:

"The satyagrahis will not be impatient with me and argue with me or with themselves and say, 'When will you give us the word? You have had your interview with the Viceroy. You have got what many of us had told you, you would get.' Your telling me this or that mattered little. The attempt was worth making. I had told you that, even if I did not get what I wanted from the Viceroy, I would bring from Simla added strength for myself. Who knows that to have added strength is not better than weak success. But my wisdom will be tested by the manner in which I use the strength. Maulana Saheb has called the Working Committee for the 11th instant. I hope I shall be ready then with my plan of action. But whatever it is, it will be good only if it carries with it the united will of all Congressmen, if not the whole nation. Then the visible action, even of one man, will be enough for the purpose intended.

Meanwhile, please remember there is to be no civil disobedience, direct or indirect. Any breach of this will weaken the cause because it will unnerve your general who is susceptible to the slightest indiscipline. A general in action has no strength but what is given to him by his people."

From Sevagram, Gandhi issued a statement on the breach:

"It is my firm conviction that British statesmen have failed to do the right thing when it was easy to do it. If India is wholly in the favour of participation in the war, they could have easily disregarded any hostile propaganda. But the determination to gag the free expression of opinion, provided it was not in the least tainted with violence, shatters Britain's claim that India's participation in war is voluntary. Had the Congress proposal been accepted, such aid as Britain would have got from India would have been an asset of inestimable value. The non-violent party would have played an effective part for honourable peace, when the proper time for it was in sight, as it must be some day. I have been shown The *Times*' comment on the breach. I accept the compliment about my resourcefulness. But great as I believe it to be, I own that it has its limitations. There must be willingness on the other side. I regret to have to say that I wholly missed it at the interview. The Viceroy was all courtesy, but he was unbending and he believed in the correctness of his judgement, and as usual had no faith in that of nationalist India. The Britisher is showing extraordinary bravery on the battlefield in a marvellous manner. But he lacks bravery to take risks in the moral domain. I often wonder, whether the latter has any place in British politics."

On October 5, Gandhi issued the third statement:

"In the correspondence between H. E. the Viceroy and myself announcing the breakdown in the talks, I have said in my letter that I would make a public statement covering matters not referred to in my letter.

"Before I do so, I think it is necessary for my purpose to say a few words regarding Lord Linlithgow. He is straight in his talk and is always deliberate and economical in his language. He is never equivocal, never leaves you in doubt as to his meaning. He conveys the most unpalatable decisions with a calmness and courtesy which, for the moment, make you think that you have heard no harsh or hard decision. He listens to your argument with a patience

and attention, I have never known any other Viceroy or any high functionary to show in an equal measure. He is never ruffled and never discourteous. With all this, however, he is not to be easily moved from his position. He meets you with his decision on the matter under discussion already made. He takes care not to let you think that it is so, but there is no doubt about it that his decision is unchangeable. He is not receptive. He has amazing confidence in the correctness of his own judgement. He does not believe in a gentleman's or any other agreement. I have always felt that after the Gandhi-Irwin pact, the British satraps decided that there should be no more such pacts. Whatever they wanted to do, they should do independently. It shows either a high sense of justice or boundless self-assurance. I think it is the latter. He and I have become friends never to be parted, be the differences between us as great as they can be.

"Holding such an opinion about H. E. the Viceroy, it pains me to have to relate what I must of my impression of the talks which have ended in a divergence which, in my opinion, was avoidable. The acceptance of my proposal would have been no less beneficial to England than to India.

"I went to Simla in the capacity of a representative and as a friend. As a friend, I presented him with my doubts as to certain acts of the British Government. To have them dissolved was necessary to enable me to determine my mental attitude which to me is more than any visible act. I felt that the putting up by the Viceroy, and then the Secretary of State, of the want of agreement by the Congress with the princes, the Muslim League and even the Scheduled Classes as a barrier to the British recognition of India's right to freedom was more than unjust to the Congress and to the Indian people. I told the Viceroy that these three represented the class or the communal interests, whereas the Congress represented no particular class. It was a purely national organization striving to represent India as a whole; and, therefore, it had always maintained that it would abide by the verdict of a national assembly elected on the basis of the broadest franchise. It had declared further its intention to abide by the vote of the separate Muslim electorate, so far as special Muslim rights were concerned. Therefore, it was wrong to speak as if Muslim rights needed special safeguards as against the Congress. The same thing applied to the Sikhs.

Delhi
सेगाँव, वर्धा.
1-10-40

Dear Gurudev,

You must stay yet awhile. Humanity needs you. I was pleased beyond measure to find that you were better.

With love,
Yours
M. K. Gandhi

Courtesy : Visva-Bharati

Gandhi's letter to Tagore, dated Delhi, October 1, 1940

18 11 40

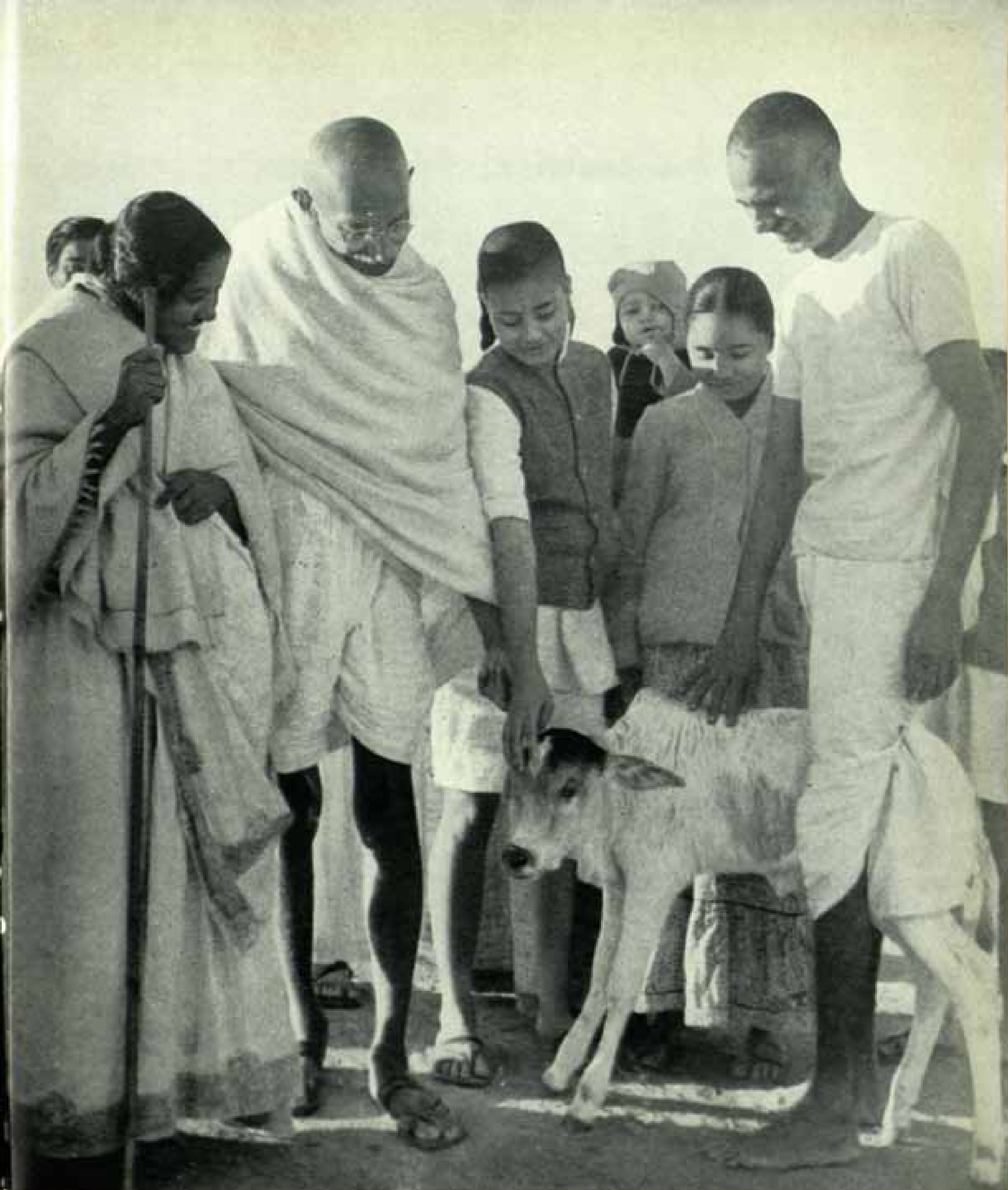
Dear Vasukaka,

Your letter is interesting. How long have you been on this diet? What is the quantity of lemon juice the variety of vegetables & their weight and the weight of baked sweet potato! Sweet potatoes vary in size

Yours sincerely
M. K. Gandhi

Courtesy : Chitrashala Press

Gandhi's letter to Vasukaka Joshi, dated November 18, 1940



Photograph : Kanu Gandhi

Patting a newly born calf, Sevagram, September 1940

GANDHI:
"You promised us independence last time."



"St. Louis Post-Dispatch," U.S.A.

An American caricature, 1940

"The princes of the present day were the creation of the British Government to subserve the British interest. As against the plea that the British were bound by special treaty obligations, I contended that the Congress did not ask the British Government to disregard them. Only they could not be used to bar Indian progress, and it was wrong to expect the Congress to produce an agreement with them. The princes were not like other parties free to conclude any agreement with the Congress, even if they wished. Moreover, the treaties, if they oblige the British Government to protect the princes, equally compel them to protect the people's rights. But it has been abundantly proved that the British had rarely interfered with the princes purely on behalf of the people. If they had been as careful of the peoples' rights as they were bound by the treaties to be, the people's condition would not have been as miserable as it is today. Had they been true to the treaties of their own making, people of States India should be more advanced than those of British India. I cited some telling illustrations of this neglect of duty.

"The introduction of the Scheduled Classes in the controversy has made the unreality of the case of the British Government doubly unreal. They know that these are the special care of the Congress, and that the Congress is infinitely more capable of guarding their interests than the British Government. Moreover, the Scheduled Classes are divided into as many castes as the Caste Hindu society. No single Scheduled Class member could possibly and truthfully represent the innumerable castes.

"I had sought the interview with the Viceroy to see if my interpretation of the British argument had any flaw. I failed to get any satisfaction on the points raised. The Viceroy would not be drawn into a discussion. I can have no grievance about his disinclination to enter into any argument. He had every right to rely upon the fact that that was a matter of high policy, not admitting of argument. There is a certain cold reserve about the British official world which gives them their strength and isolation from surroundings and facts. They do not want to be too frank. They politely refuse to enter into an embarrassing argument. They leave you to draw what inferences you like, while they continue to maintain their inflexible attitude. I suppose that is what is meant by the steel frame. For me, this side of British policy has been the least attractive. I had hoped, against the warning of friends, that I might be able to

break through this steel wall of reserve and get at the naked truth. But the imperialist Britisher is firmly fixed in his saddle.

"Nevertheless, I will not accept defeat. I must strive to have the truth admitted by the British people that the bar to India's freedom lies neither in the Congress nor any other party's inability to produce an agreement which is in its nature impossible, but that it undoubtedly lies in the British disinclination to do the obviously right thing.

"The unreality of the British reasons for refusal to treat India as a free country was not my only grouse. I drew the Viceroy's attention to certain irregularities in the prosecution of the war policy. There was agreement between us that there should be no compulsion as to war contributions. The Viceroy has promised to examine all cases of hardship and other difficulties. My purpose was to leave no ground for misunderstanding and to fight, if there was to be a fight, only on well-defined issues and without bitterness. I want to enter upon the fight with the hope that its very fairness will compel the recognition that India deserves better treatment, not merely from the British but from all the nations of the earth.

"And lest it might be said that the Congress fights because it has failed to get power, I told His Excellency in the plainest possible words that the Congress had no desire to mount to power at the expense of a single national interest. It seeks no power save for the whole nation. Therefore, he will have no opposition from the Congress, if he forms a cabinet composed of representatives of different parties. The Congress would be content to be in opposition so far as the war effort is concerned and so long as the machinery of Government has to subserve the imperialist ends. The immediate issue is not independence. The immediate issue is the right of existence, that is, the right of self-expression which, broadly put, means free speech. This the Congress wants not merely for itself, but for all, the only restraint being complete observance of non-violence. I hold that that condition answers all the difficulties by whomsoever raised."

On October 13, the Working Committee met at Wardha when Gandhi unfolded his plan of action. Two days later, he explained his plan in a public statement issued from Sevagram:

"I have had three days' discussion with the Working Committee. During it, I unfolded my plan of civil disobedience, in so far as I

was able to envisage it. Although I have sole charge of the campaign I could not think of taking the first step without consultation with the members of the Working Committee. In non-violent action, one has to carry the co-workers with one through the mind and the heart. There is no other way to enforce discipline or obedience to instructions. I must admit that it was not plain sailing for me. There was stubborn dissent from two of the members. I tried hard to carry conviction to them but, I fear, I failed. They will, however, yield obedience, so far as it is possible for them for the sake of discipline. The difference of opinion solely centred round the quantity of civil disobedience and the restrictions with which it was hedged.

"I disclose this part of the discussion to show that my plan will fall short of the expectations of those whom the dissenters represent. I would simply say to them, 'Wait patiently and see what happens. Carry out the instructions to the best of your ability. Do nothing to thwart the plan. If your reason rebels against it, you will serve the cause by seceding and educating the people along your own lines. That would be straight, brave and stimulating in that the people will learn to appraise the value of different methods. You will cause confusion by preaching from the Congress platform anything contrary to the official programme, especially when the whole organization becomes like an army. It matters little whether one person offers civil disobedience or many. The rest have to render such support, as they may be called upon to do.'

"The plan is simply this. Direct action will be commenced by Shri Vinoba Bhave and for the time being confined to him only. And since it is to be confined to individual civil disobedience and that too of him only, it will be so conducted by him as to exclude others, directly or indirectly. But since it is concerned with freedom of speech, the public will be involved to an extent. It is open to them either to listen to him or not.

"But much will depend upon what the Government wish to do. In spite of all attempt to confine civil disobedience to individuals and for the moment to one only, they can precipitate a crisis by making it a crime to listen to him or read anything written by him. But I think and believe that they do not want to invite any trouble, though they hold themselves in readiness to cope with every trouble that may face them.

"I have discussed with Shri Vinoba various plans, so as to avoid all unnecessary frictions or risks. The idea is to make all action as strictly non-violent, as is humanly possible. One man's violence, veiled or open, cannot go beyond a certain limit, but within that limit it would be effective. One man's non-violent action would be despised and ridiculed by the non-believer in it. In truth, while the effect of a given violent action can be reduced to mathematical terms, that of non-violent action defies all calculation and has been known to falsify many that have been hazarded. How far I shall be able to present an example of unadulterated non-violence remains to be seen.

"Who is Vinoba Bhave and why has he been selected? He is an undergraduate having left college after my return to India in 1916. He is a Sanskrit scholar. He joined the ashram almost at its inception. He was among the first members . . . In order to better qualify himself, he took one year's leave to prosecute further studies in Sanskrit. And practically at the same hour at which he had left the ashram a year before, he walked into it without notice. I had forgotten that he was due to arrive that day. He has taken part in every menial activity of the ashram from scavenging to cooking. Though he has a marvellous memory and is a student by nature, he has devoted the largest part of his time to spinning in which he has specialized as very few have. He believes in universal spinning being the central activity which will remove the poverty in the villages and put life into their deadness. Being a born teacher, he has been of the utmost assistance to Ashadevi in her development of the scheme of education through handicrafts. Shri Vinoba has produced a text-book, taking spinning as the handicraft. It is original in conception. He has made scoffers realize that spinning is the handicraft *par excellence* which lends itself to being effectively used for basic education. He has revolutionized *takli* spinning and drawn out its hitherto unknown possibilities. For perfect spinning, probably, he has no rival in all India.

"He has abolished every trace of untouchability from his heart. He believes in communal unity with the same passion that I have. In order to know the best mind of Islam, he gave one year to the study of the Koran in the original. He, therefore, learnt Arabic. He found this study necessary for cultivating a living contact with the Muslims living in his neighbourhood.

"He has an army of disciples and workers, who would rise to any sacrifice at his bidding. He is responsible for producing a young man who has dedicated himself to the service of lepers. Though an utter stranger to medicine, this worker has by singular devotion mastered the method of treatment of lepers and is running several clinics for their care. Hundreds owe their cure to his labours. He has published a handbook in Marathi for the treatment of lepers. Vinoba was for years director of the Mahila Ashram in Wardha. His devotion to the cause of Daridranarayan took him first to a village near Wardha, and now he has gone still further and lives in Paunar, five miles from Wardha, from where he has established contact with villagers through the disciples he has trained.

"Vinoba believes in the necessity of the political independence of India. He is an accurate student of history. But he believes that real independence of the villagers is impossible without the constructive programme of which khadi is the centre. He believes that the spinning wheel is the most suitable outward symbol of non-violence which has become an integral part of his life. He has taken an active part in the previous satyagraha campaigns. He has never been in the limelight on the political platform. With many co-workers he believes that silent constructive work with civil disobedience in the background is far more effective than the already heavily crowded political platform. And he thoroughly believes that non-violent resistance is impossible without a heart belief in and practice of constructive work.

"Vinoba is an out-and-out war resister. But he respects equally with his own the conscience of those who, whilst not being out-and-out war resisters, have yet strong conscientious objection to participation in the present war. Though he represents both the types, I may want to select another who will represent only one, namely, conscientious objection to participation in the present war.

"It was necessary to introduce Vinoba Bhave at length to the public in order to justify my choice. This will, perhaps, be the last civil disobedience struggle which I shall have conducted. Naturally, I would want it to be as flawless as it can be. Moreover, the Congress has declared that it will avoid all avoidable embarrassment to the Government consistently with its own existence. For that reason too, I had to strive to produce the highest quality irrespective of the quantity.

"But Shri Vinoba must fail, as I must, if we do not represent the Congress, let alone the whole nation. And we shall certainly not represent either if they do not give us the full-hearted co-operation which is ceaseless prosecution of the constructive programme. It is not vocal co-operation that is required. It is co-operation in work that is needed. The signs of such co-operation will be phenomenal progress in spinning, complete disappearance of untouchability, and increasing friendliness between the communities, and an increasing sense of justice in every walk of life. Unless rock-bottom justice and equality pervade the society, surely, there is no non-violent atmosphere. Above all, there should be no civil disobedience but what is sanctioned by me. This is peremptory obligation binding on every Congressman. If it is disregarded, there is no co-operation. The representative character belonging to Vinoba and me is then challenged. And I can say with confidence that, if the full-hearted co-operation I want is forthcoming, not only will the issue of freedom of speech be decided in our favour, but we shall have gone very near independence. Let those who will take me at my word. They will have lost nothing and they will find that they had contributed greatly to the movement of freedom through truthful and non-violent means.

"Let me repeat the issue. On the surface it is incredibly narrow, the right to preach against war as war, or participation in the present war. Both are matters of conscience for those who hold either view. Both are substantial rights. Their exercise can do no harm to the British, if their pretension that to all intents and purposes India is an independent country is at all true. If India is very much a dependency in fact, as it is in law, whatever the British get from India can never be regarded as voluntary, it must be regarded as impressed. This battle of life and death cannot be won by impressed levies, however large. They may win, if they have the moral backing of an India truly regarded as free. Non-violent Congress cannot wish ill to Britain. Nor can it help her through arms, since it seeks to gain her own freedom, not through arms but through unadulterated non-violence. And the Congress vanishes if, at the crucial moment, it suppresses itself for fear of the consequences or otherwise by ceasing to preach non-violence through non-violent means. So when we probe the issue deep enough, we discover that it is a matter of life and death for us. If we vindicate that right, all is

well with us. If we do not, all is lost. We cannot then win swaraj through non-violent means.

"I know that India has not one mind. There is a part of India that is war-minded and will learn the art of war through helping the British. The Congress has no desire, therefore, to surround the ammunition factories or barracks and prevent people from doing what they like. We want to tell the people of India that, if they will win swaraj through the non-violent means, they may not co-operate militarily with Britain in the prosecution of the war.

"This right of preaching against the participation in war is being denied to us, and we have to fight against the denial. Therefore, while that right will be exercised only by those whom I may select for the purpose, all the other activities of the Congress will continue as before unless the Government interfere with them.

"A question has been asked why, if I attach so much importance to quality, I do not offer civil resistance myself. I have already said that, unlike as on previous occasions, I do not wish to do so for the very good reason that my imprisonment is likely to cause greater embarrassment to the authorities than anything else the Congress can do. I want also to remain outside to cope with any contingency that may arise. My going to jail may be interpreted as a general invitation to all Congressmen to follow suit. They will not easily distinguish between my act and speech. Lastly, I do not know how things will shape. I myself do not know the next step. I do not know the Government plan. I am a man of faith. My reliance is solely on God. One step is enough for me. The next step He will make clear to me, when the time for it comes. And who knows that I shall not be an instrument for bringing about peace not only between Britain and India but also between the warring nations of the earth. This last wish will not be taken for vanity by those who believe that my faith is not a sham but a reality greater than the fact that I am penning these lines."

Glossary

Acharya, preceptor; teacher.
Ahimsa, non-violence.
Alpatma, little soul.
Artha, wealth.
Ashram, a hermitage; a place for study and discipline of life.
Atman, soul.
Avatar, an incarnation of God.
Babu, Mr.
Badshah, emperor.
Bande Mataram, Hail Mother; the refrain of the Indian national anthem known by the same name.
Bania, a trader.
Behn, sister.
Bhai, brother.
Brahmacharya, continence.
Charkha, a spinning wheel.
Daridranarayan, God in the form of indigent and poor.
Dewan, prime minister.
Dharma, duty; religion.
Dubla, an untouchable caste of Gujarat.
Durbar, ruler's court; chief minister.
Gadi, throne; a post of authority.
Gayatri, an invocation of sun-god; a mantra recited by twice-born Hindus.
Girasia, absentee landlord of Kathiawad, belonging to Rajput community.
Goonda, hooligan.
Goondaism, hooliganism.
Gur, molasses.
Gurudwara, a Sikh temple.

Guru, gurudev, a preceptor; a spiritual guide.
Hal, plough.
Halpati, owner of a plough; farmer.
Harijan, a man of God; untouchable.
Himsa, violence.
Jai, victory.
Janab, sir.
Ji, an affix added to names denoting respect, e.g., Gandhiji.
Kalma, basic Muslim prayer.
Kama, love, lust.
Kamadhenu, cow of plenty, supposed to yield all desired objects.
Karma, action; retribution.
Khadi, hand-woven cloth from hand-spun yarn.
Khan, nobleman.
Khudai Khidmatgar, servant of God; Red Shirt volunteer.
Kisan, peasant.
Lathi, stick.
Maharaj, king; ruler.
Mahatma, great soul.
Mandal, conference; association.
Mantra, a sacred formula; incantation.
Maulana, a Muslim divine.
Namaz, Muslim prayer.
Nawabzada, son of a nawab.
Nira, unfermented fresh juice from a palm tree or a date tree.
Nirvana, nothingness; release from the cycle of rebirth; supreme bliss.
Pan, betel.
Pandit, a learned Hindu teacher; a prefix to certain Brahmin family names, e.g., Pandit Nehru.
Parishad, conference.
Praja Mandal, state's peoples association.
Purdah, veil; the custom of keeping women in seclusion or under a veil.
Purna Swaraj, Complete Independence.
Qaid-e-Azam, great leader.
Raj, rule.
Rajakiya, political.
Ram Raj, kingdom of Rama; beneficent rule.

Ramzan, a sacred Muslim month during which fast is observed.
Rashtrabhasha, national language.
Rashtradharma, duty towards nation.
Rashtrapati, Congress President.
Rashtriya shala, national school.
Rishi, a seer.
Ryot, an Indian peasant.
Sadhana, a persistent effort; dedication.
Samskar, impression of previous deeds; innate tendencies inherited from past life.
Sanatanist, orthodox Hindu.
Sangh, organization.
Sardar, nobleman; a honorific term, e.g., Sardar Patel.
Sarvadharmasamatva, equal regard for all faiths and creeds.
Satyagraha, "a force which is born of truth or non-violence"; tenacious clinging to truth; civil or non-violent resistance.
Satyagrahi, one practising satyagraha.
Sena, army.
Shastra, religious law books of the Hindus.
Shri, Mr.
Shrimati, Mrs., Miss.
Swadeshi, belonging to, or made in, in one's own country.
Swaraj, self-government; self-rule.
Takli, spindle-like spinning instrument.
Tamas, stolid, dark.
Tapas, tapascharya, penance; austerity.
Tyaga, renunciation.
Udyog bhawan, industries centre.
Varna, caste.
Zamindar, landlord.

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